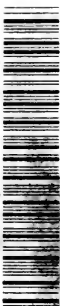


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BY JAMES FLETCHER, ESQ.

WITH A PORTRAIT.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

New-York :

J. & J. HARPER, 82 CLIFF-STREET.

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BY JAMES FLETCHER, ESQ.

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

WITH A

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Obtained from a Polish Patriot Nobleman.

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THE singular orthography of the names is not the least difficulty we have to encounter in the minutiae of Polish history, and it has been greatly increased by the attempts of most writers to reduce them nearer to their pronunciation. Chevalier, in his Preface to the "*Histoire de la Guerre des Cosaques*," published in 1663, justly complains of the custom of authors, even in his time, to "*estropier*," as he terms it, these words; and the *Revue Encyclopedique* also points out the absurdity of it. The Author has endeavoured to give the Polish spelling as correctly as possible, and subjoins the following hints for pronunciation, taken principally from the "*Letters, Literary and Political, on Poland*," Edinburgh, 1823."

All vowels are sounded as in French and Italian; and there are no diphthongs, every vowel being pronounced distinctly. The consonants are the same as in English, except

w, which is sounded like *v*, at the beginning of a word; thus, Warsawa—*Varsafa*; in the middle or at the end of a word it has the sound of *f*, as in the instance already cited; and Narew—*Nareff*.

c, like *tz*, and never like *k*; thus, Pac is sounded *Patz*.

g, like *g* in Gibbon; thus *Oginski*.

ch, like the Greek χ or *k*; thus, Lech—*Lek*.

cz, like the English *tch* in pitch; thus, Czartoryski pronounced *Tchartoryski*.

sz, like *sh* in *shape* ; thus, Staszyc like *Stashytz*.
szcz, like *shtch* ; thus, Szczerbiec like *Shtcherbietz*.
rz, like *j* in *je*, with a slight sound of *r* ; thus, Rzewuski
—*Rjeruski*.

The Author gladly avails himself of the present opportunity to express his thanks for the communication so kindly furnished by E. H. Barker, Esq.

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CHAPTER I.

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zylas—Introduction of Christianity—Boleslas the Great—Invested with Regal Dignity—Defeats the Russians—Is again victorious—Obtains the Name of "the Terrible"—Casimir I.—Polish Revolution—Insurrection of the Serfs—Casimir recalled from Exile—Boleslas II. takes Kiow—Infidelity of the Polish Women—Murder of the Bishop of Cracow—Boleslas excommunicated and dethroned—His Character—Anecdotes—Polish Militia—Campaigns of Boleslas IV.—Reign of Casimir II., called the Just—The Teutonic Knights—Casimir the Great—Formation of the Diet—Polish Laws—Pacta Conventa—End of the Piaſt Dynasty.

THE Poles pretend to carry back their annals to the remotest periods; some, indeed, go so far as to trace their descent from Lech, a great-grandson of Noah. From him they make the *Heneti*, the *Alivroi* of Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus, and Euripides, descend. These they consider the progenitors of the Sarmatians, who were their own immediate ancestors. Much curious and fanciful speculation is wasted on this point by the Polish historians; but the fact is, that all this grand superstructure of genealogy is reared on the petty foundation of the resemblance of two words. The relation with Lech, whom they call a great-grandson of Noah, is derived merely from some fanciful affinity between

the name of Lech, one of the monarchs who figure in their ancient and fabulous annals, and that of some individual whom they meet with in the family-tree of the patriarch. The inferred connexion between the Sarmatians and the Heneti, or *Alvetoi*, is still more arbitrary, if possible. The Sarmatians, or some tribe of them, adopted the name Sclavonians, most probably from vanity, being derived from *Slawa*, which, in their dialect, signifies *glory* or *honour*; so that Sclavonians means the *honourable* or *glorious* nation. The Greek word *Alvetoi* is of the same signification, which solves the important mystery. We will now take leave of these fictions, and proceed to something more palpable and substantial.

The most ancient records preserved in the archives of the country are a memorandum of a private family-compact, dated 1088, and a bull of Pope Clement III., which was issued about the end of the twelfth century. The monks, who introduced Christianity into Poland about the year 960, were the first who were acquainted with writing in the kingdom, and made records. This has been the case, indeed, with almost all the other countries of Europe; but with them, the history, prior to the monkish annals, is preserved in the songs of the national bards. The rhythm and measure of verse keep this kind of tradition almost inviolably the same as it came from the lips of the poet; and the only question, therefore, is about its original authority. Some scanty information may thus be derived from the traditional songs of a country; but no light of this kind is shed on the darkness of the early Polish history. The Poles had either no bards or wandering minstrels, or possessed at that time so little taste for song, that their effusions have been forgotten, and all the first generations of the people, unembalmed by the muse, have mouldered into their kindred dust, and are heard of no more.

The monks, therefore, were the first repositories

of learning. Almost all the Polish historians, from Martin Gallus,* who lived in the twelfth century, and whose works are the oldest extant on the subject till nearly the seventeenth, were of the clerical order, and wrote in Latin. The Bishop Naruszewicz, who was employed by the government in 1780 to compile a history of Poland, and had all possible access to information, both in his own country and elsewhere, found himself obliged to suppress the first volume which he meditated on the early ages, and make his narrative commence with the introduction of Christianity.

This occurred in the year 965 A.D.; from which time we have every reason to believe that the national events were recorded by contemporary writers. Tradition says, that about 135 years prior to this period a fundamental change took place in the government by the accession of the family of Piast to the throne; and as the rumour of this event must have been comparatively fresh in the memory of the generation of Poles then living (who, at least, might have received it in the third or fourth generation), we may include this period in the authentic history, and will therefore from this date our narrative.

The family of Piast, who came to the throne 830 A.D., preserved their authority, with some interruption, till 1386, A.D., when the dynasty of the Jagellons commences. This last continued till 1572 A.D., at which time the crown became elective. The history thus divides itself into three periods, which division we shall adopt.

The site and confines of Poland at this early time are very indefinitely described by historians; but we may infer from various landmarks which occur in the history that it lay between the Vistula and Oder, extending not much beyond the modern Posen to the north, and barely as far as the Carpathian mountains

* Between the years 1110 and 1135.

to the south, comprising the greater portion of what is called Poland Proper.* This district was most probably stocked with inhabitants by the superabundant population of the erratic tribes on the east of the Vistula, who advanced westward to occupy the countries vacated by the savage hordes who overwhelmed the Roman empire. These would be called by classic geographers Sarmatians, an indefinite name, which served in the ancient maps to fill up all the unexplored tract from the Vistula to the Volga. Some of these tribes, as above mentioned, assumed the name of Slavonians, and the portion who settled in Poland gave the country that title from a Slavonic word signifying a plain,—Poland being almost one uninterrupted level.†

The government of a rude people is uniformly found to be arbitrary: formed and defended by a savage soldiery, it must always eventually succumb to a military despotism. The business of war, more than any other, must be performed by simultaneous exertion; and this can only be ensured by enducing the individuals of a society to form together and to serve under one heavy yoke. When the weight becomes too galling, the yoke-fellows can readily throw it off, but it is only to resume it; for the same reasons which led them to submit to it in the first instance again operate to oblige them to own its

* The landmarks mentioned in the text, from which we deduce the limits of Poland at this period, are as follows:—Gnesne and Posen, which are almost in the same latitude, were cities of note even at this early period. Gnesne was for some time the seat of government, and was made an archiepiscopal see at the first introduction of Christianity. Allowing, therefore, a little farther extent towards the north, we have the boundary on this side. The eastern limits could not have been much, if at all, beyond the Vistula; for we find, that in the invasion of Russia by Boleslas I., about 1000 A. D., he is stopped by the river Bug, or Bog, in the Russian territory. Hungary, Bohemia, and Silesia, with whom Poland was continually waging war, mark out its boundaries on the south and west.

† "An observer in a balloon might pass at the height of twenty toises over almost the whole of Poland, without fear of coming in contact with any mountains or other obstructions."—*L'Observateur en Pologne par Hubert Vautrin.*

sway. The Polish *voyvodes*, or barons, had just exerted their power, and emancipated themselves thus early from the tyranny of their despot duke or leader, who is known by the name of Popiel, at the period when our history commences. They say that Heaven fought for them; and describe, in the figurative language of illiterate barbarism, that a swarm of rats were bred in the dead bodies of the tyrant's victims, which exacted retribution for their wrongs, destroying the whole of his hated family without exception.

Dreading to suffer a repetition of the horrid scene of tyranny, the Poles determined to enjoy for a time the sweets of unrestrained liberty; but justice without her sword had no power over a horde of savages, and they were therefore obliged to restore it to her. Assembling to appoint their chief magistrate, great contests naturally ensued, and, as is generally the case in such matters, while the powerful were opposing each other's pretensions, an humble individual, whose low condition allowed him to pass unnoticed through the crowd of competitors, possessed himself of the vacant throne. Perhaps the enraged candidates, rather than allow one of their opponents to obtain the victory, vented their spleen in fixing on this obscure person. The story is differently related by monkish writers, and is embellished not a little with miracle.

As political troubles seldom come alone, a famine now added to the calamity of discord and anarchy. Death, in its most horrid forms, was carrying on its ravages among the people, when two angels, says the old monkish historian, arrived at Cracow, and took up their abode with one Piast, a poor artisan (a wheelwright), son of Kossisco, a citizen of Kruswitztza, which was then the seat of power. Piast had already a character for hospitality, but, like the poor widow's of Samaria, his stock of provisions was reduced to his last cruse. But even this, which was a small cask of wine, he shared with his guests, who,

admiring his charity and benevolence, promised him the crown of Poland. The faith of Piast, says the historian, was equal to his other virtues, and this removed the mountains which stood between him and the throne. Implicitly following the directions of his angel visitors, he distributed the contents of his little cask among the thirsty multitude, and found that "it failed not." The people cried out that he was chosen by the gods to be the father of his nation, and the *voyvodes*, or barons, complying with their wish, took him from his shop, and "set him among princes."

It was about the year 830 that Piast was elevated to the ducal dignity. His power was controlled only by his own will and the fear of his subject barons, but he did not abuse his authority.* The Poles, although indebted to him for nearly thirty-one years' peace, have preserved scarcely any remembrance of him, but his name. This however is an "expressive silence:" it was a greater glory, and required a more powerful mind, to keep his restive and warlike subjects within due bounds for such a space of time, than to leave a name emblazoned with victories and "all the pomp and circumstance of war."

The Poles at this period were like all other barbarous nations; the mass of the people were almost slaves† to the *voyvodes*, whose only business was

* He made Gnesne the seat of government. Tradition says that this city was of much more ancient date than Piast, having as well as Posen been founded by Lech, one of the traditionary dukes who lived about 550 A. D. It was named Gnesne from a word signifying *nest* in Polish, as an eagle's nest was found there. For this reason also, says Puffendorf, an eagle is the national crest; and on the same account the order of knighthood of the white eagle was so entitled.

† We say *almost slaves*, for at this period they were not entirely subject to the barons. With the exception of some slaves taken prisoners in war, or bought, who were only to be found in the houses of the great lords, the rest of the inhabitants were free and equal in the eye of the law.—*Essai Historique sur la Legislation Polonoise Civile et Criminelle*, par Joachim Lelewel.

war and hunting: the only laws were will and fear, and their only religion a gross idolatry. Without arts or commerce, their sole pursuits were the use of their weapons and athletic sports: nearly uncivilized, and with their minds unoccupied by a particle of science and learning, they thought only of "what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed." Their taste was exercised only in the embellishment of their arms, and their judgment in the choice of their horses.

The ducal authority descended from son to son of the posterity of Piast, in almost unquestioned succession; but their names serve for little more than to fill the vacant niches of history till the accession of Mieczylas I. This prince came to the throne in the year 964 A. D.

He was born blind; but at the age of seven, without any assignable cause, he gained his sight. Such an opportunity for the exultation of national bigotry could not be allowed to pass unnoticed, and the event was accordingly attributed to a wonderful interposition of supernatural power. The monks, who introduced Christianity into Poland in this reign, as we shall more fully mention hereafter, would of course invent something as a type of their undertaking, and make miracles prepare the way for the advent of Christianity.

It was not a miracle, however, which softened the heart of Mieczylas for the reception of religious faith, nor was a monk his preacher. Love was his priest, and woman's lips first schooled him in the principles of the Christian religion. He was enamoured of Dombrowka, the daughter of the Duke of Bohemia, a country which had lately embraced Christianity. The lady refused to accept his suit unless he were baptized; and Mieczylas, prompted by the impulse of affection rather than faith, sacrificed the superstitions and prejudices of his fathers on the

altar of love. But the religion which he first adopted for the sake of Dombrowka he afterward propagated for its own. He became a most ardent champion of the gospel; broke down even with his own hands the idols of his country, and built Christian churches on the ruins of pagan temples. He founded the archiepiscopal sees of Gnesne and Cracow, and appointed St. Adalbert, who had been most instrumental in the introduction of Christianity, to be the first diocesan of the former see. In fine, this prince almost wholly devoted himself to the services of religion. We may form an idea of the excessive ardour with which he advocated his new faith from the edict which he issued, that when any portion of the gospel was read, the hearers should half-draw their swords, to testify their readiness to defend its truths. Too often, alas! have those swords been drawn in the cause of faith or religious dogmas, and sprinkled even the mercy-seat with human blood.

The character of this prince has been studiously disparaged; but the only reason for it is, that it has been so flatteringly drawn by the monks. The approval of these religious writers is, in the eyes of most modern historians, a damning blot; but in a case like this, when we have no proof to the contrary, we must "lean to mercy's side," and may even answer the detractors in Pope's noble words:—

"Who builds a church to God, and not to Fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name."

On the death of Mieczylas, in 999, the ducal authority devolved on his son, Boleslas. Like his father, he was a devotee to the newly-adopted faith, and the first act of his reign was one of piety. He obtained the remains of St. Adalbert or Albert, who had so signalized himself in propagating Christianity, from the Prussians who had murdered him, and deposited them with great pomp at Gnesne. For

this act of gratitude to the saint who first brought him "the glad tidings of salvation" he received his reward, a crown of glory, though a corruptible one; for Otho III., emperor of Germany, to whom St. Adalbert was known by the fame of his reported miracles, made a pilgrimage to his tomb in consequence of a vow, and in return for the hospitality he experienced from Boleslas, conferred on him the regal dignity. This decree was also ratified by the pope.

But peace-making was not an ingredient of the king's religion; he became one of the most active warriors of his time. The monks, however, seemed inclined to be witty on the subject, and called the sword* with which he fought "the sword of God," in allusion to a tradition that it was an angel's present.† The first people against whom he unsheathed this miraculous weapon were the Bohemians, whose duke, without any provocation, had invaded his country with a large army, committing the most wanton and barbarous ravages. The invaders, however, immediately fled on the approach of the Poles, who in their turn acted on the offensive. The Polish troops at this time were chiefly cavalry, at least all those who could afford to keep a horse; the rest served on foot. This seems to have been almost the only real distinction among the people.‡ The booty was their only pay, and their weapons the only baggage with which they encumbered themselves. The Bohemians could not withstand these warriors, and even Prague, their capital, was obliged

* This sword he is said by some to have received from Otho, and after being notched on the gates of Kiow, it was deposited in the treasury of the kingdom, and worn by the kings at their coronation.

† It is remarked by the old historians that Boleslas sanctified all his bloodshed with a semblance of religion; and the first formal edict that appears in Polish history was issued in this reign, being an order that a Christian hymn should be sung before engaging in battle.

‡ All the people were obliged to serve, and the comes of the district commanded them. These commanders were judges also, and were called Kastellani and Castellans.

to surrender, after an obstinate resistance of two years. The duke fell into the hands of the conqueror, who sullied his glory by cruel, although provoked retribution; putting out his enemy's eyes, to deprive him at least of the pleasure which scenes of blood had always seemed to afford him. Moravia also yielded to the victor on his first approach. The only use Boleslas made of his conquest was to levy contributions, and demand a trifling tribute, more as a feudal acknowledgment than an impost.

His attention was afterward engaged by the Russians, who, being a growing, restless people at that time, and strengthened under the wise jurisdiction of the famous Wladimir, were rather troublesome and encroaching neighbours. Another pretext was added for making the Russians feel the weight of the Polish arms. On the death of Wladimir, civil war broke out in Russia, in consequence of a disputed succession; and one of the parties requested the aid of Boleslas. The Poles marched into the country, and advanced as far as Kiow,* the most celebrated and opulent city in that part of Europe, called by the writers of the time the rival of Constantinople (*æmula sceptri Constantinopolitani*).

The golden gate of Kiow (as it was emphatically called) opened before the miraculous sword of Boleslas; and the Poles, after repaying themselves for their campaign with the riches of the city, established their ally on the throne, demanding in addition a petty tribute. War was renewed, in which the Poles were uniformly victorious. The greatest opposition they encountered was on the banks of the Bug; but the intrepidity of the king carried all before it, and the Russians were routed with great slaughter. The river was so stained with blood, that it has retained ever since the name of *horrid*, and Boleslas was

* The history of this city may be seen in the *Tableau de la Pologne* edited by Chodzko. Vol. i. p. 458.

entitled by his enemies *Chroby the Terrible*, or *Valiant*, by which appellation he is generally known in history.

He is said next to have turned his arms against the Saxons, and extended his conquests to the Elbe, on the banks of which he erected two iron columns, to mark the bounds of his victories. The inhabitants of the country to the north of Poland, called Borussians, now Prussians, were also reduced to obedience. But the Poles retained none of these conquests; returning, like an overflowed river, once more within their natural limits.

Boleslas, after having thus governed and fought so many years, was laid in the tomb of his fathers in 1025, leaving the crown to his son; who, not choosing to disobey the *requiescat in pace* on his sire's monument, enjoyed nine years of peaceful luxury, quiet, and debauchery, interrupted only by two or three revolts.

Casimir I., grandson of Boleslas, being young, and the Poles fearing that he would follow the bad example of his father, was not allowed to enjoy the uncontrolled regal authority; Rixa, his mother, being nominated regent. She, however, disappointed the expectations of her subjects; imposing enormous taxes, and advancing Germans to the most important offices: in consequence of which she was obliged to fly from the kingdom; taking the precaution, however, to carry off the regal treasure. Her son, Casimir, was also obliged to fly from the vengeance of the voyvodes.

The throne being thus left vacant, a general scene of saturnalia ensued in Poland. The serfs, imitating the example of their masters, rose in a body, and retaliated the cruelties which they had so long suffered. The reaction was equal to the pressure, and the whole system of servitude was at an end. The Bible, from which the corrupt, timeserving priest took his text, on passive obedience to the most

severe and tyrannical master, seemed to the poor peasant only to add another link to the already heavy chain of bondage; the church of God appeared but another prison-house; and the name of the Most High that of a strange god, who had come among them as a destroyer. Bibles, churches, monks, and masters were made one great sacrifice of atonement to the enraged serfs, on the idolatrous altars of their fathers. The *lex talionis*, that law which has always been so deeply engraved on the human heart by the finger of revenge, was the only code of these infuriate bodies. Their masters had taught them to plunder, tyrannize, and murder; and their last lesson was to rebel.

But an invasion of their country by the Bohemians, who took advantage of the opportunity, now turned the points of the Polish swords from each other's bosoms. These marauders laid waste all the west of the kingdom; and the Russians, adding to the slaughter, ravaged the east. The measure of the people's calamities seemed now full. The rebellious members of the political body again assumed their functions; the serf bowed his neck to the yoke, and the Poles supplicated the ministers of that very religion they had just abjured, for aid; they rebuilt the churches, which were almost yet smoking; sent an embassy to the pope for absolution and a curse upon their enemies; and, lastly, invited back the prince, Casimir, whom they had just banished, to resume the sceptre.

Casimir, however, was not to be found; and all their search seemed fruitless. Messenger after messenger returned without tidings, and hope after hope was frustrated. At length they remembered that his mother, Rixa, who had taken refuge in Germany, would most probably be acquainted with the retreat of her son; and after some difficulty they succeeded in obtaining from her the wished-for intelligence. Five years had elapsed since his flight, when,

retiring to France, he had become a student at the university of Paris; he then went to Italy, where the wandering outcast king entered a monastery, "to beg for a piece of bread," and assumed the religious habit. After this, he retraced his steps to France, and became an inmate of the abbey of Cluny,* in which seclusion he was hidden while the Poles were so earnestly seeking him. But although found, another apparently insurmountable obstacle stood in his road to the throne; his religious vow prohibited him from engaging in secular matters. The pope, however, had the power to grant a dispensation of this tie, which he at length consented to do, on condition that they should pay Peter's pence, and that the whole nation should shave their heads, and wear, like other Catholic professors, white surplices on the days of festival. The Poles still continue to wear their heads shaved, except a small portion on the crown; though it proceeds, we believe, from a very different reason to that assigned.†

Casimir soon re-established peace in Poland, and ensured himself from aggression on the Russian frontier, by marrying Mary, the sister of the Russ duke. Religion also shared his attention with polity; and in gratitude to the monks of Cluny, who had afforded him an asylum when his own subjects had turned him out of the palace of his fathers, he invited many of them into Poland, and fixed them in the abbey of Tyniec,‡ near Cracow. Casimir, having thus deserved well of his generation, made way for his son, Boleslas, after a reign of sixteen years.

The crosier was now laid aside for the sword.

* Later Polish writers deny that Casimir became a monk, or was even at Cluny; but state that he went to Liege (Leodium) to finish his education.

† The custom of shaving the head is of much more ancient date than even the Polish nation. It was a remarkable custom among the ancient Poles to shave the heads of the males when they arrived at the age of manhood, which was a sign of their adoption as sons and heirs.—See *Lelewel's Essay*.

‡ This had been founded by Boleslas the Great.

Boleslas II. was ready to fight everybody's battles, to stretch out a hand to every falling sovereign, even at his own peril. His court became the asylum of unfortunate princes, where they found a king who was both ready and powerful to save. The son of the Duke of Bohemia, the brother of the King of Hungary, and the eldest son of the Duke of Russia were at one time under his protection, and the claimants of his assistance; nor were their requests disregarded. He reinstated them all on their thrones, and even fought the battles of the Hungarian and Russian monarchs twice over. His benevolence to the latter prince eventually, though not directly, cost him his crown.

Kiow was the only city which offered any great resistance to the Polish arms. Its opulent citizens defended themselves with a valour proportionate to the importance of their charge. Famine, however, at length reduced them to obedience; and Boleslas, who was as great an admirer of courage as a possessor of it, treated the vanquished but brave Kiowians with the greatest generosity. So fully, too, did the citizens appreciate his noble spirit, that as he marched through the streets with his troops they greeted him with acclamations; a much more glorious triumph than if thousands and tens of thousands of shackled kings had swollen the pageant of ovation.

But Boleslas, when "the Golden Gate" of this city of voluptuousness was once shut on him, heard no more the call of war: wearied with his labours, he in a moment of weakness and lassitude laid his head on the lap of a Delilah, and woke only to find that his strength was "gone from him." Kiow was the foster-child of Constantinople and the Eastern empire. The voluptuous Greeks had made it a storehouse of all the luxuries of Asia; here was the noble architecture of Athens festooned with the gaudy tapestry of Lydia, and the rough metal of

Russian swords embossed with the polished gold of Ophir and Persia. The hardy natives had plunged into the stream of pleasure with all the zest of novelty, and were tasting of its enjoyments with the unpalled and greedy appetite of healthy and vigorous constitutions.

This was the state of Kiow when it received Boleslas with open arms. The generous Pole quaffed the bowl of pleasure which it held out to him with the freedom of unsuspecting and unguarded frankness; and found, when too late, its intoxicating qualities had transformed and degraded all the nobler energies of his nature. The king's example was followed by his troops, and this army of warriors slept away, month after month, on the soft couches of Kiow; and, as if they had eaten of the fabled fruit of the lotos-tree, at length forgot that their homes were without masters, their wives without husbands, and their children without fathers.

They had already been absent from Poland, it is affirmed, seven years, engaged in these various wars and pleasures; and the Polish women, who found that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," naturally consoled themselves with what was at hand, and lastly bestowed their favours on their slaves. The example was generally followed; one Penelope only was found—Margaret, the wife of Count Nicholas, of Zemboisin. She continued patiently to weave the web of expectation till her faithless lord should return to his duty. The tidings of this general revolt among the women spread to Kiow, and most of the enraged Poles, cursing Boleslas for being the author of their disgrace by detaining them from home, and without waiting for permission, or while their passion might cool, hurried to Poland, to wreak their vengeance on their wives and their insolent paramours. They met, however, with a vigorous resistance: for the women, maddened by despair, spurred on their lovers to prove themselves worthy of their

favours, and sell their lives dearly; while they did not confine their efforts to mere exhortations, but fought in person, seeking out their faithless husbands, on whom to vent their rage. But in the heat of this motley battle another enemy appeared. Boleslas, at the head of the few remaining troops, was come to chastise them all; the women for their infidelity, the slaves for their presumption, and the Poles for their desertion and contempt of martial discipline. Poland was deluged with blood, and deprived of some of its best sons. Many of the women perished, and the rest are said to have been obliged by the king to suckle dogs, as a punishment for the degrading connexion they had formed with their slaves.

But the last scene of the tragedy was yet to come. St. Stanislas, bishop of Cracow, either being shocked at the unchristian slaughter, or making it a pretext for other designs, reproved Boleslas, threatened him with the vengeance of the church, unless he ceased from his bloody work, and even went so far as to refuse him admittance to his church, still called *St. Stanislas-Kirche*, while he was performing mass. The hasty and provoked king, in a moment of rage, burst into the sanctuary, and murdered the poor prelate at the very altar.*

The thunders of the pope now roared over the devoted head of Boleslas; he was accursed, excommunicated, dethroned, and banished. He who had given away kingdoms found none to bestow on him the poorest pittance, and those who had grown rich on his bounty refused him the meager alms of a tear. Abandoned by men, and denounced as one abhorred by God, he crept away into the forests, whose savage tenants were the only living creatures which were left to afford him an asylum, and make him an inmate of their caverns. At length the poor penitent, broken-hearted, went to pour out the last bitter dregs

* St. Stanislas was buried in the cathedral of Cracow, and there is still standing there his superb monument.

of the cup of life in a monastery in Carinthia; and he who had wielded a sceptre, and revelled in all the luxuries of Kiow, spent the last few days of his life in preparing lentils and hard bread for the monks, in a miserable kitchen.

The life of Boleslas forms one of the saddest and most striking pictures afforded by the worst vicissitudes of human life. From the almoner of kings to the pensioner of mendicants; from the leader of armies to the menial of a monastery; from the royal voluptuary to the starving beggar; from the palace to the kitchen; how stupendous was his fall! and how stupendous the power which hurled him from the throne! Nor was his moral fall less great. He had set out in life with a heart full of generous feeling; he had a noble spirit; but the bland and seducing smile of the votary of gayety lured him to its orgies, and corrupted the pure warm blood of a hero's heart. Self-dissatisfaction, added to the violence of his passions, then accelerated his downfall; and the hand which was once stretched forth only to help the weak and assist the poor, was now stained with the blood of a minister of that faith to which his great namesake and predecessor had devoted all the energies of his vigorous mind. Had the first and last parts of this king's life been transposed, his character would now perhaps be viewed in a very different light. We must not, however, moralize longer on the inmate of the Carinthian monastery, but return to Poland, and its destiny under succeeding princes,—a dynasty that had already begun to feel the dreadful effects of giving offence to that spiritual authority that was preparing to rule the world.

The vengeance of the pope extended to the sons of Boleslas; and visiting the sins of the father on his children, he excluded them from the succession. He however allowed his brother, Wladislas, to assume the supreme authority, but shorn of the pomp of the

regal title; and it continued in his family for a long time.*

On the death of Wladislas, his son, Boleslas III., succeeded to the throne in 1103. The fond but imprudent father had made a division of the Polish territory between his children; but the collisions which naturally ensued furnished Boleslas with an opportunity of uniting the whole of his brothers' patrimonies with his own. No sooner had he thus consolidated the strength of Poland than he found an occasion to exert it. The King of Hungary was now involved in a war with Henry V., emperor of Germany; and having been instrumental in establishing Boleslas on his throne, the Polish duke was bound to assist him. He therefore made a diversion of the emperor's troops on the side of Bohemia, under the pretext of maintaining the right of one of the contending candidates for the Bohemian crown, who had taken refuge with him. Henry was compelled to desist from the expedition against Hungary, to meet this new enemy. The German troops overran Silesia, which was then dependent on the Polish government, and penetrated as far as Glogau, a small town on the Oder. This place was at that time but feebly garrisoned; notwithstanding, the citizens gave the emperor a warm reception. They were at length obliged to make overtures, and agreed to surrender in six days, unless they received succour.

No aid having arrived, the emperor advanced to take possession of the town, but was unexpectedly saluted with a discharge of arrows and javelins. The citizens had received notice from Boleslas, that he could not arrive within the six days, but would not be long after; so that, availing themselves of the laxity with which treaties were kept in that age

* The regal dignity was not reassumed till more than two hundred years after, in the reign of Premislas II. Wladislas appointed one of his favourites *palatine*, or commander-in-chief, which was the origin of the authority of the *palatines*.

of savage warfare, they sacrificed their word to their liberty, and still held out. So obstinate was their resistance, that the Germans were obliged to retire, and besieged Breslau, the capital of Silesia, on the Oder, and sixty-seven miles to the south-east of Glogau. The German historians* say, that a battle ensued here between Henry and Boleslas, in which the latter had so much the worst, that he sent an ambassador to the emperor, with overtures of peace.† The name of this ambassador was Scrobisus. Henry is said to have received him very haughtily, and given him to understand that the Poles must not expect any peace from him, unless they submitted to his conditions, and became tributary. At the same time, runs the story, he led him to his treasury, to exhibit his wealth; and, pointing to the gold, told him there were the weapons with which he would reduce the Poles to subjection. To this the ambassador made no answer, but taking a ring from his finger, threw it into the heap, saying, with a smile, "Here is something to augment the store." Henry is said to have answered with equal coolness, shutting the coffer, *Habdank*; I thank you! Happy, remarks a modern historian,‡ would this state have been, if, surrounded by neighbours who think as this emperor, it had preserved in our days that noble disinterestedness and contempt for gold, which would have ensured it its independence. A battle ensued, in which the Germans were completely routed; and the emperor then gladly accepted the offer of peace, which was afterward strongly cemented by the marriage of Boleslas with Henry's sister.

It is said that the duke employed this season of repose in preparing to join the crusaders, who were

* Heiss. lib. ii. c. 10; and Gobelinus *Persona Cosmad.* æt. 6.

† This, however, is differently stated by some authors: The *Universal History* makes the Germans perform a march from Glogau to Warsaw distance of more than 200 miles, in one day.

‡ Rulhière, *Histoire de l'Anarchie de Pologne*, tom. i.

at this time fighting for the rescue of Jerusalem. History, however, does not tell us what use he made of these preparations.

Boleslas, after having been conqueror in forty battles,* was now to meet with a reverse. It was treachery, however, which turned the scale of glory against him. He had intrusted a Hungarian, whose tale of sorrow had won on his heart, with the government of one of the frontier towns, which the ingrate betrayed to the Russians. The duke, marching with an army to resent the injury, encountered the enemy, and was again betrayed by the cowardice of one of his generals, the palatine of Cracow, and obliged to take to flight. He is said to have sent the pusillanimous author of his disgrace a hare-skin and a spinning-wheel. But his spirit was so broken by the defeat, that it brought him to the grave. All the glory of six-and-thirty years' victory was tarnished by this one miscarriage;—one single day had blighted the laurels which he had so long worn, and which his enemies had seen green and unfaded, till a traitor snatched them from his brows. A. D. 1139.

It was in this duke's reign that the *pospolite*, or militia of Poland, was first established. Every palatinate (of which Poland Proper contained eleven) was obliged to raise a certain number of cavalry within a stated time, to be at the king's orders.

Boleslas divided the dukedom between his four eldest sons; but this regulation pleased neither them nor their subjects. "All, or none," was their motto; and after great contentions and various turns of fortune, Boleslas, the second son of the late monarch, obtained the mastery, and was declared duke of Poland, A. D. 1146. He however allowed the children of his elder brother, Wladislas, to retain Silesia, a portion of his patrimony, which continued in his

* Puffendorf, after some of the old historians, says but twenty-seven, but he enumerates only the "*batailles rangées*."

family a distinct government, but a fief of Poland.*

Wladislas, however, not content with being an almoner of a younger brother's bounty, engaged the emperors of Germany, Conrade and Frederic Barbarossa, successively to assist him in the recovery of the Polish crown. The Polish historians agree in stating that the emperors both failed, and were reduced to the necessity of negotiation.† The contest was, however, shortly concluded by the death of Wladislas, which happened as he was on his road to Poland to try the chance of fortune once more.

Boleslas, being peaceably seated on his throne, found the time hang heavy on his hands. Religious wars were the prevailing fashion of the day, and furnished employment for the idle and the fanatic. Saint Peter's descendants, like their great apostolic ancestor, have always been but too ready to draw the sword in the name of Christ. The Polish duke enlisted in the same cause, and pretending to be grieved at the idolatry of his northern neighbours, the Prussians, advanced into their territory with the gospel in one hand and the sword in the other. These people were then a barbarous race, inhabiting the greater portion of what is now called Regal or Polish Prussia, extending northward from Poland to the Baltic. They were sunk in the grossest idolatry and ignorance;—their objects of worship were among the most loathsome creatures in nature—snakes and reptiles. Besides these, however, like all other uninformed nations, they regarded thunder, lightning, and other natural phenomena, with superstitious and fearful veneration.

These were to become the Polish duke's converts; and accordingly advancing into Prussia, he compelled

* It continued some time under the government of the descendants of Wladislas, and ultimately became subject to the crown of Bohemia about 1339. At length it was invaded by the Prussians.

† The German historian says, that Frederic reduced Boleslas to obedience, and obliged him to pay tribute.

them to submit to his arms and to hear the Christian doctrines preached. No resistance could be made by undisciplined savages; they were all driven into the Christian fold. "Die in your sins," said the savage monk to the stubborn recusant, and suited the action to the word; whereas "a promise of the life which now is and that which is to come" was the reward of the humble disciple. But "the bread of life" was not to be given gratis, and Boleslas made them pay dearly for it out of their scanty stores. It is said, however, by some historians, that the conversion of the whole nation was effected without any bloodshed. Perhaps they would with equal facility have enabled us to account for the speedy decay of the early Christian church of Prussia, by reason of its not having been cemented by the blood of martyrs. Be that as it may, the Prussian soon relapsed into idolatry, and unfortunately sent their Polish apostles prematurely to receive the crown of martyrdom, as some small acknowledgment for their late kindness. Decoying the Poles into a defile, they attacked them with great slaughter; and Boleslas himself narrowly escaped.

The Polish duke, finding the occupation of conversion not so agreeable as he had anticipated, turned his attention to the management of his secular affairs, in which course he persevered till the period of his death, in 1173.

In the early part of this reign, the spirit of European chivalry directed towards the crusades had spread through Europe, and extended even to Poland. It was in 1147, that, induced by St. Bernard, Conrade, the emperor of Germany, in company with his nephew and successor, Frederic Barbarossa, led sixty thousand men against the Saracens for the recovery of the holy sepulchre. Henry, a younger brother of Boleslas, caught the infection, and at the head of a numerous army of Polish volunteers embarked in the same cause. One campaign, however, cooled his religious ardour, and he returned back to Poland.

But this short service did not lose its reward; for he is handed down by the monkish writers as one of the greatest champions of the Holy Cross.

Four years after the death of Boleslas IV., during which interval Mieczylas, his third brother, held the ducal dignity, Casimir II. was called to the throne by the discontented Poles; an event which occurred in 1178. He was the youngest brother of Boleslas IV. It was not ambition that induced him to take possession of the throne from which Mieczylas was ejected; for, on the contrary, he even requested to be allowed to resign it to him, pledging himself to the voyvodes for his better conduct. This offer was, however, refused, the Poles not being willing to trust themselves to their former tyrant; and the only fruit of the negotiation was the proof of Casimir's mild and generous disposition.

He was engaged in various wars with the Russians, though not of sufficient consequence to Poland to merit detail; in all which, however, he rendered himself conspicuous for clemency and benevolence, "smoothing the rugged brow" of war, and binding up the wounds which his sword had made.

The following anecdote is given as an admirable illustration of the mildness and benevolence of this amiable prince. "He was one day at play, and won all the money of one of his nobility, who, incensed at his ill fortune, suddenly struck the prince a blow on the ear, in the heat of his uncontrolled passion. He fled immediately from justice; but being pursued and overtaken, was condemned to lose his head. The generous Casimir determined otherwise. 'I am not surprised,' said he, 'at the gentleman's conduct; for not having it in his power to revenge himself on fortune, no wonder he should attack her favourite in me.' After these generous words he revoked the sentence, returned the nobleman his money, and declared that he alone was faulty, as he encouraged by his example a pernicious practice that might terminate in the ruin of hundreds of the people."

This prince was indeed a father to his subjects : he viewed the oppression of the nobles over the serfs with an eye of sorrow ; and though it was not in his power to change the constitution of Polish society by emancipating them and making them perfectly independent, what he could do he did, in protecting them by strict laws from wanton cruelty. He has left behind him the character of the most amiable monarch that ever swayed the Polish sceptre. He had faults, but they were almost lost in the number of his noble qualities and his virtues. He was a lover of peace, and the friend of the people.

His manners were of the most conciliating kind,

“ And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side.”

His clemency was not the result of fear, nor his bounty the ostentation of pride. Like Aristides, he never swerved from duty and equity ; and, unlike him, he tempered right with mercy. He has therefore even one claim more than the Athenian to that rare and enviable appellation which his subjects bestowed on him—the *Just*.

After several succeeding reigns, in which nothing occurred worthy to be remembered, we find Wladislas* III. on the throne in 1306. He had been deposed, but after five years he was reinstated in his authority. The regal title had been revived by one of the preceding princes in the year 1296, but the Poles were determined not to bestow it on Wladislas until he had rendered himself deserving of it by reforming his mind and character as a prince.

The first opportunity he had of meriting well of his country was in its defence against new enemies and invaders, no less than the Teutonic knights. This military order had obtained a settlement in Prussia, and were continually infesting the northern frontier. The Germans who accompanied Frederic

* Surnamed Lokietek, on account of his diminutive stature, meaning but an ell in height.

Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, to the crusades in 1188, being left by his death without a commander, were at length formed by Henry, King of Jerusalem, into a religious and martial order, called the Knights of St. George. This title was afterward changed to Knights of St. Mary. They were required to be of noble parentage, to defend the Christian religion, and promulgate it to the utmost extent of their power. In the year 1191, Pope Celestine III. granted them a bull, addressed to them under the title of the Teutonic Knights of the Hospital of St. Mary the Virgin. In the beginning of the 13th century, Culm, in Prussia, was allotted to them, under the condition that they should turn their arms only against their pagan neighbours. This injunction, however, was soon set at naught. After conquering all Polish Prussia (as it is now called) and building Marienburg, they invaded the Polish territory, and overran the greater part of Pomerania.

Wladislas, when they had been denounced by the pope as out of the pale and protection of the church, soon checked their inroads. After several battles, in which the Poles were always superior, a great and last effort was made, but still fortune declared against the Teutonic knights; for, according to the Polish historians, 4000 of them were left dead on the field, besides 30,000 auxiliaries either slain or taken captive. Wladislas had it now in his power to exterminate the order; but, at the sacrifice of policy, he contented himself with taking possession of his own territory, and binding them down by a treaty.

Having thus fought the battles of his country, he returned to obtain the crown which his subjects could no longer refuse. However, to give the ceremony the sanction of religion, Wladislas sent an ambassador to Rome to persuade the pope, more, perhaps, by a liberal sum of money than words, to ratify it with his authority. This confirmation being obtained, the ceremony of coronation was performed with great

pomp in the cathedral at Cracow.* Death, however, shortly transferred the diadem from his head to that of his son Casimir, in the year 1333, to whom he gave these instructions on his death-bed:—"If you have any regard for your honour or your reputation, take care to yield nothing to the knights of the Teutonic order and the Marquis of Brandenburg. Resolve to bury yourself under the ruins of your throne rather than abandon to them the portion of your heritage which they possess, and for which you are responsible to your people and your children. Do not leave your successors such an example of cowardice, which would be sufficient to tarnish all your virtues and the splendour of the finest reign. Punish the traitors, and, happier than your father, drive them from a kingdom where pity opened an asylum for them; for they are stained with the blackest ingratitude." These prophetic words, observes a modern historian, may serve as an answer to the manifestoes published by Prussia concerning the partitions; and on this account they deserve to be recorded.

The first remarkable event of the new reign was a rupture with the Teutonic knights; but this being settled amicably, Casimir planned an invasion of Russia. This design was so vigorously executed, that the greater portion of the modern Polish province, *Russia Nigra*, was then brought under the power of Poland.

But Casimir founded his claim to the gratitude of his subjects on a much sounder foundation than foreign conquest; he portioned out the domain of individual right with a measure more fixed than the false and arbitrary rule of strength and power, and marked out its limits with the obvious landmarks of written law. Before his time, there was no code of statutes: precedent, opinion, and passion were the

* The form of the ceremony continued the same from this time. The Archbishop of Gnesne placed the crown on his head. A white eagle, which was the ornament of his throne, became the national arms.

overbearing assessors on the tribunal of justice. The noble of a district was the supreme judge over his demesne; and though from his court there lay an appeal to the king, it was only a mere show of redress. The injured dependant knew too well, that should he make his complaint heard by the deaf ear of royalty, his sovereign, even if he defended the right, would not thank him for being embroiled with one of his powerful nobles; and the cruelty of his lord would only be aggravated by opposition. The arbitration of civil cases was equally irregular, and even more absurd. A written oath was administered to one of the parties, and was made the criterion of the case. If the reader made the least hesitation or mistake, he lost his cause. On the contrary, he who had sufficient hardihood to go unhesitatingly and unblushingly through the process of perjury obtained for his villany the credit of right and justice. The form was, however, as reasonable as any other mode of ordeal, and, in fact, still more so, for it was not made to depend entirely on chance; nor was it so absurd as trial by single combat. Guilt is sooner confused and unnerved by the eye of scrutiny than by the drawn sword; and the "*mens conscia recti*" arms itself more frequently with the defensive armour of the uncowed eye, and the firm composed voice, than with muscular strength and agility.

Casimir, however, determined to make reason depose chance and passion from the judgment-seat, and that justice should be fairly meted out by the standard weights of the law-book.

The three modes of trial by ordeal were also known in Poland. We have stated above that there was no regular code; there was indeed a confused mass of laws, but Casimir, the Polish Justinian, was the first who caused them to be reduced to a consistent form. His predecessor had convoked an assembly of the bishops and barons at Chenciny, in the same year that he died, to revise the laws; but

the work remained unfinished: and ten years after, Casimir called a diet at Wislica, previously to which, separate meetings had been held in Great and Little Poland, to draw up sketches of the desired reform; and on this basis they proceeded to found the famous code of Wislica. Pecuniary compositions for crime still continued to be countenanced, and the *cmétons*, or serfs, were not so favoured as the nobles. The lot of the lower orders, however, was much ameliorated; if oppressed, they were allowed to sell their goods, and change masters. For these laws the sovereign obtained the flattering title of king of the serfs. He appointed regular courts in each palatinate, with fixed fees for the judges. Nor did he content himself with making statutes for his people, but guarded the welfare of all ranks with the most jealous care, and was amply rewarded by their love and respect.

Envy could not behold such excellence without attempting to sully it; and accordingly, she has employed against it the ostracism of scandal. But the worst charges which she could bring against the character of Casimir are for errors of gayety; the evil effects of which are for the most part confined to the offender, and which, consequently, though most will regret, many will defend, and few will altogether condemn. Besides, offences of this kind, not being committed on "house-tops," can seldom be fully brought home to the delinquent, and even the confession of candour will be received but as a plea of guilty to a trifling count in scandal's lengthy indictment, to evade conviction on others of more importance and enormity. But virtue will not disown one of her favourite sons for a venial error; the benevolence, justice, and prudence of Casimir would cover a hundred times more sins; and the small voice of detraction is drowned in the unanimous acclamations of his people, who, having best experienced his character and felt his goodness, concur in styling him the "*Great*."

On the death of Casimir, which occurred in 1370, there being no immediate heirs, his sister's son, Louis, King of Hungary, was called to the Polish throne.

As Louis was the sovereign of another kingdom, the Polish nobles, apprehending that their interests would be compromised to those of his other subjects, made him agree to certain stipulations as a safeguard, before they would allow him to take possession of the insignia of authority. There had always been some form of this kind on the accession of the preceding kings, but it was merely a formal coronation oath, binding the new monarch to preserve the interests of his people. In the present case, it became something more than a mere matter of form, being made in fact a "corner-stone" of the Polish constitution. This bond between the king and his subjects was called the *Pacta Conventa*; and has continued to be administered to the monarchs on oath ever since,* and is the Magna Charta of Poland. The conditions required of Louis were as follows:—He was obliged to resign all right to most of the extensive domains annexed before to the crown, and make them the benefices of his officers or starostas; whom he could not remove without consulting the senate or assembly of nobles. He was not to exact any personal service, to impose any taxes, or wage war without their consent. Nor was he to interfere with the authority of the lords over their serfs. The power of the king was thus limited to little more than that of a guardian of the laws.

Louis agreed to these demands, but his conduct afterward proved that it was not with an intention of observing them. He fixed his residence entirely in Hungary, and, regardless of the complaints of the Poles, filled all the principal offices with Hungarians. Great disturbances ensued, and the neighbours of

* Subject to the alterations made by the diets, as will be mentioned hereafter.

Poland, taking advantage of the discord, made frequent incursions. Happily, however, death removed the author of these troubles, after he had reigned twelve years; and having no male heirs, Louis terminated the dynasty of the Piasts in the year 1382.

In this first period were laid the foundations of all the most important Polish institutions, its laws, diets, orders; and not only political establishments, but those of learning also.

The laws, we have seen, were formed into a regular code by Casimir; Wladislas first assembled his nobles in a diet in the year 1331, and his successor Casimir followed his example. These convocations were not merely assemblies of one order, but were formed by the kings on the very principle of balance of power—between the aristocracy, consisting of the influential nobles, and the numerous barons who possessed the title of noblemen, but, in fact, constituted a separate interest. This is a distinction of no small importance; all the army, at least those who fought on horseback, were styled nobles, for *miles* and *nobilis* were synonymous.

The commercial classes were not admitted to any great privileges, since at that time they consisted chiefly of foreigners and Jews. The latter people, indeed, had obtained possession of most of the ready money in Poland, as well as elsewhere. Boleslas II. granted them a charter in 1264, and the same protection was extended to them by Casimir the Great. It was said that this prince was interested in their favour by Esther, a young Jewess, of whom he was enamoured. Cracow was in his time one of the Hanse Towns in alliance with forty other cities in Europe. The exchange, still standing, impresses us with a high idea of the commerce of this age, thus intrusted to the Jews. So sedulously did this industrious people avail themselves of their advantages, that at the marriage of Casimir's granddaughter Elizabeth, Wierzynck, a Jewish merchant

of Cracow, requested the honour of being allowed to make the young bride a marriage present of 100,000 florins of gold,—an immense sum at that time, and equal to her dowry from her grandfather.

With regard to the learning of this period, we first meet with the monkish historian Gallus, who wrote between the years 1110 and 1135. His history commences in 825, and extends to 1118. According to the custom of his order, he wrote in bad Latin verse. He was followed by Matthew Cholewa, bishop of Cracow, and Vincent Kadlubek. This latter writer was also diocesan of the same see, and was born about the year 1160. He wrote in the time of Casimir the Just, and in his history attempts to penetrate the mysteries of the Polish origin. But the circumstance which most conduced to the promotion of learning in Poland was the foundation of the University of Cracow, by Casimir the Great, in 1347. It was regulated in imitation of that of Paris; and such eminence had its professors attained in a short time, that Pope Urban V. estimated it, in 1364, as equal to any of the universities of Europe.

CHAPTER II.

Hedwiga marries Jagellon, Duke of Lithuania—Jagellon Dynasty commences 1386—Lithuanians—Their Origin, Religion, and History—Union with Poland—Union of the Romish and Greek Churches—Jagellon defeats the Teutonic Knights—Wladislas succeeds, 1433—Defeats the Sultan Amurath—Is killed in the Battle of Varna—Casimir IV.—Subdues the Teutonic Knights—Polish Prussia added to the Kingdom—Origin of the Polish Diets, 1468—State of Learning in Poland under Casimir—Printing introduced—John Albert, 1492—Ascendency of the Nobles—Alexander—Sigismund I.—Annihilation of the Teutonic Knights—Sigismund Augustus—Order of the Livonian Knights suppressed—Union with Lithuania consolidated—State of Learning under Sigismund—Copernicus—Zaluzianski, the Polish Linnaeus—Religious Toleration—Trade of the Jews—Termination of the Jagellon Dynasty, 1572—Remarks on this Period.

LOUIS having no male heirs, the Poles called his daughter Hedwiga to the throne in 1384. Between the death of Louis and the accession of Hedwiga there was an interregnum of two years, occupied in opposing the pretensions of Sigismund, Marquis of Brandenburg, who had married the elder daughter of Louis. It was stipulated, however, that she should follow the will of her new subjects in the choice of a husband, and that he should constantly reside in Poland. Many candidates offered themselves for that hand which was dowered with a kingdom; but William, her cousin, a prince of the house of Austria, found most favour in the lady's eyes. He was handsome in his person, elegant in his manners, and magnificent in his retinue.

The Poles, however, would not consent to an alliance which would immediately subject them to the power of the encroaching Austrians, but fixed on Jagellon, Duke of Lithuania. His offers were most tempting to the Poles: he promised to unite his extensive and adjacent dominions to Poland inseparably

under one government, and pledged himself for the conversion of his Lithuanian subjects to Christianity: Jagellon was accordingly invited to come and take possession both of his wife and crown. Hedwiga, however, still remained faithful to her first love, and secretly invited William to Poland. Their affections were nipped in the bud; for the Polish nobility, being apprized of their clandestine interviews, surrounded the palace, sent William home, and kept the queen under the strict surveillance of military guards. She at first refused to give Jagellon an audience; but the entreaties of the nobility and the coercion of confinement shook her constancy, and the handsome Lithuanian soon completed the obliteration of her former affection. Jagellon was baptized by the name of Wladislas; and Poland and Lithuania were henceforth united under one crown.

This duchy was an immense accession to the geographical magnitude of Poland. It extended from Poland on the west, beyond the Dnieper or Borysthenes on the east, and from Livonia on the north. The Lithuanians and Samogitians, who are different clans of the same origin, are now generally believed to have sprung from a different stem from the Poles. They spoke a language widely dissimilar to the Polish or the Russian.* Their religion was a singular medley of idolatry: they believed in a supreme god or Jupiter, whom they called the omnipotent and all-wise spirit. They worshipped the god of thunder under the name of *Perkunas*; they paid homage to a god of the harvests: there were also maintained priests who were continually feeding a sacred fire in

* See Chap. xiii. of Malte Brun's *Tableau*, on the Lithuanian Language. There are scarcely any traces of this tongue remaining even in Lithuania. It bears a singular resemblance to the Greek and Latin, not only in a few words, but in its construction. An affinity to some word in either one or other of these languages will be traced in the following list:—*Mienou* (the moon), *giaras* (good or honourable), *ugnis* (fire), *diéna* (day), *wiras* (man), *dantis* (tooth), *saule* (sun), *akie* (eye), *unguris* (a snake), &c.

honour of *Parni*, the god of the seasons; and their flamen was called *Ziutz*. Trees, fountains, and plants, all came in for a share of their veneration. They had sacred serpents called *Givoïte*, and believed in guardian spirits of bees, cattle, &c. As to their government, it was, like that of all other barbarous nations, despotic; and the nobles were less numerous and more tyrannical to the lower orders than in Poland. Ringold was the first who united the various provinces, and assumed the title of grand duke of Lithuania in 1235.

In 1320 we find the famous Gedymin on the ducal throne. He wrested Volhynia, Severia, Kiovia, and Czerniechovia* from the Russians. He divided his dukedom between his sons, but Olgerd made himself the sole possessor. Jagellon, one of his thirteen sons, succeeded him in 1381. When raised to the throne of Poland, he appointed his cousin Witold to the government of Lithuania.

This province did not so readily coalesce with Poland as was expected. Jagellon did not find the people very docile disciples; for though the Romish faith was partially disseminated in Lithuania Proper,† and Wilna made the seat of a bishop, the districts which had been subject to Russia had long adopted the doctrines of the Greek church, and obstinately adhered to their tenets; while the Samogitians refused to accept any modification of the Christian religion; and though the episcopal city Miedniki was built at this time, they clung firmly for a long period to their own strange and wild superstitions.‡ In the latter part of this reign (in 1434), however, the union of the Roman and Greek churches took place at the convent of Florence; and the Bishop of

* Kiovia and Czerniechovia compose the Ukraine, properly so called.

† Consisting of the modern palatinates Troki and Wilna.

‡ Even at the present day, the peasants of Samogitia preserve some traces of their ancient superstitions, and for a long time obstinately refused to use ploughs or other agricultural instruments furnished with iron, for fear of wounding the bosom of mother-earth.

Kiow adopted the Roman ritual, but the Greek clergy were allowed the privilege of marriage.

Nor was the political union effected without opposition. The Lithuanian nobles were afraid of losing their ascendancy over their serfs by their connexion with the less despotic Polish barons; and Witold, urged on by the emperor Sigismund, who was jealous of the growing power of Poland, revolted, and was making preparations for his coronation, when he suddenly died in 1430.

Jagellon established the Polish law on a firmer foundation in the diets of 1422 and 1423, and gave an additional sanction to the code of Wislica, which Casimir had begun. To him the Poles are indebted for their famous law that no individual is to be imprisoned until convicted.*

This monarch was obliged to fight as well as preach and legislate: he was in the early part of his reign continually occupied in checking the encroachments of the Teutonic knights. He defeated them in a great battle at Grunewala in 1410, and they were happy to obtain peace in 1422. Having thus laid the foundation of Poland's greatness, he died in 1433.†

His son Wladislas, was not much more than nine years old when the crown of Poland was placed on his head. His mother and some of the nobles were his guardians during his nonage. Scarcely had he escaped from his pupilage, when he served his maiden campaign against the Turks. The descendants of Othman, not content with their conquests in

* *Neminem captivabimus, nisi jure victum aut in crimine deprehensum.*

† Jagellon seems to be no favourite with Salvandy; this historian not only attacks his character and administration, but even his person. ("Petit, laid." &c.) He also makes him the author of the degradation of the lower classes. This point has been justly disputed in the critique on his work in an excellent article of the *Revue Encyclopedique* for August, 1829, written by D'Herbelot.—See *Histoire de Pologne avant et sous le roi Jean Sobieski*, par N. A. de Salvandy. Paris, 1829. Tom. 1. p. 91, &c.

Asia, had crossed the Hellespont to lay low the tottering Eastern empire. They ravaged Transylvania and a great portion of Hungary; and the Hungarians, opposing them in vain, conferred their crown on Wladislas, who immediately took the field. Amurath headed the Moslem army, and Wladislas the Poles: an experienced warrior was thus pitted against a boy. But the battle is not always for the strong; like a spent wave, as if exhausted with victory, the Turks made but a feeble attack on that Polish army. The Moslems were defeated with the loss of 30,000 men, and were obliged to sue for peace. A treaty was concluded with mutual oaths, and Wladislas was presented with the Hungarian crown, which he had so nobly defended.

But this success only urged him, like the gamester, to try the chance of another cast. Treaties were nothing, oaths were nothing; the pope's legate, who accompanied the youthful king, produced his authority, and silenced all scruples of conscience. But the Turkish swords, which before were blunt with service, were now whetted with revenge; and for once the Moslem crescent was the banner of justice. Amurath regained his laurels on the plains of Varna; the Poles were routed, and Wladislas fell a victim to his own rashness and perfidy. Thus perished this young Polish king, in his twenty-first year, A. D. 1444; an event which spared the lives of many thousands of human beings.*

The reign of Casimir IV., who succeeded his brother, forms a brighter era in Polish history. His predecessor's fate seems to have given him a distaste for the dangers of war, and the early part of his reign was passed in rather disgraceful peace. His first undertaking was against those inveterate and formidable enemies of his kingdom, the Teutonic knights, whom he defeated. The Prussians,

* Nine years after this the Turks took Constantinople.

wearied with the oppression of these fanatical brigands, rebelled against them, and placed themselves under the protection of Casimir, in 1454. The knights did not surrender their conquests without a struggle, and the war was prolonged twelve years. The Poles overran all the Prussian territory which continued to side with the oppressors. So great was the devastation, that out of twenty-one thousand villages which are said to have existed before this time in Prussia, scarcely more than thirteen thousand survived the flames, and nearly two thousand churches were destroyed.* The knights were at length obliged to submit; and a treaty was concluded, by which they surrendered all Polish Prussia, and held the remaining portion as a fief of Poland. Casimir formed this new addition of territory into four palatinates, under the same government as the rest of his kingdom, excepting certain commercial privileges granted to the trading towns. Dantzic, Thorn, Elbing, and Culm were important acquisitions, being of great mercantile consequence. Dantzic was one of the principal Hanse Towns, commanding the commerce of the Baltic; and Casimir conferred on it the exclusive privilege of navigation on the Vistula. Moldavia, also, was now tributary to Poland; so that this kingdom had then the means of uniting the commerce of northern Europe with that of the south.

The system of internal policy was also undergoing several changes. In the early part of this reign the senate confirmed the decree that the king was not to make war without their permission. In the year 1467, the foundation of the Polish diet or parliament was laid. Before that period the senate consisted only of the bishops and great officers of the kingdom, who formed the king's council, subject also to the interference of the nobility.

* *Tableau de la Pologne. Malte Brun; augmenté par Leonard Chodzko. Tom. i. p. 255.*

Learning began to be cultivated by the Polish gentlemen in this reign, and the Latin language was now generally introduced. It is said, that in a conference with the King of Sweden, Casimir, being addressed in Latin, was obliged to employ a monk as interpreter; and, ashamed of his ignorance, he enjoined the study of that language among the gentlemen of Poland by an edict. It has continued ever since almost a living language in that country.

The first printing-press was erected at Cracow in 1474.* The Polish language began to be cultivated and used by authors, and even written elegantly. Schools were generally established, to which the sons of the citizens, or even serfs, had the same access as the nobles. Kromer, the historian, called the Livy of Poland, son of a peasant, and raised to the bishopric of Warmie, and Janicki, of the same origin, noted for his Latin poems, and crowned with the laurel-wreath by Pope Clement VII., were among the numerous authors who lived in this reign. The name of Gregory of Sanok, the Polish Bacon, must not pass unnoticed. He was born about the year 1400, and died in 1417. He held a professorship in the university of Cracow some time, in which office he introduced a spirit of liberal and independent inquiry, for which we could scarcely give the age credit. He hated the scholastic dialect, says his biographer, ridiculed astrology, and introduced a simple mode of reasoning. He was also a great admirer and patron of elegant learning, and was the first who introduced the works of Virgil into notice in Poland.

The diets up to this period had been general assemblies of all the nobles, that is, of the army; but the inconvenience of holding meetings of more than a hundred thousand horsemen obliged the Poles to

* It is reported that there is a work extant bearing date, Cracow, 1465; but Salvandy says, the press in the monastery of Oliva was the first. The statement above is from Podczaszynski.—*Fragmens sur la Littérature Ancienne de la Pologne.*

adopt the form of representation which had become almost universal in Europe. Dietines, or *colloquia*, had long been held by each of the palatines in their palatinates for the administration of justice, and these now began to appoint deputies for the management of the public business. In the course of time every district assumed the same privilege, and at length, in 1468, sent two deputies to a general diet. This first diet was convened to debate on the propriety of renewing the war against the Teutonic knights, of which we have already seen the conclusion. The system, however, was only gradually introduced. The nobles of many of the provinces refused to give up their rights to a deputy; and Regal Prussia, in particular, was so tenacious of this privilege, that it has reserved even to modern times the power of sending as many nobles to the diet as it pleases. The deputies also were bound to act precisely according to the instructions of their constituents, and the nobles still maintained their custom of general meetings or confederations when occasion required. The towns also at this time enjoyed the elective franchise.

Casimir, having thus spent nearly forty-eight years in the service of his kingdom, extending its territory, conquering its enemies, framing its constitution, and civilizing it with arts and learning, left it to the care of his third son, John Albert, A. D. 1492.

Good fortune and faction raised John Albert above his two elder brothers, but courage and policy maintained him in his elevation. The latter of these cardinal virtues in a king was not, however, always exhibited in the present monarch's councils. He had admitted an Italian, Buonacorsi, formerly his tutor, into his confidence, and showed much deference to his opinions. According to his advice, he attempted to lessen the preponderance of the nobility in the political scale. The plan was prudent; and if it could have been effected, and their power withheld till the

tiers-etat was sufficiently strengthened with wealth and arts to counteract its undue influence, Poland might, like England, have enjoyed a firmly-balanced constitution, in which the dissentient ranks are so well adjusted, that disorder and its remedy are always produced simultaneously.

Albert impolitically gave publicity to a design in which concealment was the principal requisite to ensure success. Unfortunately, a circumstance which happened shortly after the disclosure rendered the king still more an object of suspicion to the nobles. The Polish troops were waylaid by an ambuscade during a campaign against the Walachians, and a great number of nobles, who almost entirely composed the army, were put to the sword. This event, coupled with the king's denouement, engendered a suspicion of treachery, and made the nobles the more on the alert, not only to preserve their privileges, but to intrench on those of the king and people. The Lithuanian nobles, in particular, were strenuous in their opposition to the king's design; their principles had always been more exclusive than those of the Poles, but the danger which threatened their privileges united both in the common cause. From this time we may date their despotism over the serfs, who, not having allies in the commercial classes, were obliged to submit quietly. The influence of the trading classes was checked by two causes. In the first place, every gentleman who had a house and a few acres of land could enjoy all the privileges of nobility; hence none but the lower order, or foreigners, would engage in mercantile pursuits: and, secondly, the towns were composed chiefly of German strangers, Jews, and even Armenians, who had been long considered almost out of the pale of the law, and could not be admitted to the rights of naturalization. From this time, therefore, we may date the origin of the exclusive influence of the nobles; they became resolute in maintaining arbitrary author-

ity over their serfs; the commercial class were included in the proscription of rights, being interdicted by the diet in 1496 from becoming proprietors of land or possessors of church preferment.

But what Albert unintentionally pulled down from one part of the constitution he rebuilt in another; and to make amends for having thus weakened the political power of the people, he fortified their juridical rights. In his time the law-courts were submitted to more fixed regulations, and corruption and oppression of the people exposed and punished.

In the reign of his successor, Alexander, who came to the throne 1501, the crown was still more debased. The king was prohibited from raising any money or using the revenue without the consent of the diet. This law, called *Statutum Alexandrinum*, is said to have passed to check Alexander's prodigality to musicians, to whose art he was passionately attached. All the Polish laws were revised and corrected at this period by the chancellor Laski, after whom the code is named.

When Sigismund I. came to the throne in 1507, he found that it was not a bed of roses. Faction rose up against him as a many-headed monster; and it required a powerful and long arm to decapitate the ever-growing heads, and perseverance with resolution to sear the wounds. But the Polish monarch was not to be soon intimidated; he defeated the Lithuanians who had revolted, and routed the Russian auxiliaries of the rebels. The latter success was in a great measure owing to the artillery which was now introduced into the Polish army, or rather among their Bohemian allies and fellow-subjects.

Albert, Marquis of Brandenburg, and nephew of Sigismund, had been elected Master of the Teutonic order, in the hope that his connexion with the Polish kings might be the means of advancing their interest. No sooner was he invested with this authority, than he renounced all allegiance to Poland, and refused to

submit to his liege-lord Sigismund. He was, however, soon brought to obedience, and obliged to resign his authority as master. This resignation was the knell of the Teutonic knights; they were now deprived of all standing ground in Prussia, and were obliged to retire to Mariendal in Franconia. The Poles were thus delivered from one enemy; but little did they imagine that the successors whom they appointed to the vacated authority would eventually be their destroyers. Sigismund formed Eastern Prussia into a dutchy in 1225, and intrusted it to Albert as a fief. Polish or Western Prussia was hence called Regal Prussia, to distinguish it from the dutchy.

But when the king had quelled all foreign troubles, he found others at home of a more insidious and less tractable nature. His wife, Bona, was the prime mover of these intrigues; she had obtained a complete ascendancy over the mind of her husband, who was now no more than a puppet which played her own game. The nobility, being summoned by the king to assemble at Leopold, or Lemberg, in Galicia, obeyed his orders, but it was to make universal complaints against the queen and the administration. This confederation they styled *Rokosz*, in imitation of the Hungarians, who, in cases of public emergency, held their assemblies in the plain of *Rokosz*, near the city Pest. The confederation was not formed of very stubborn materials; for they were all dispersed, we are told, by a shower of rain. This assembly and protest, however trifling in themselves, were of much importance as establishing a precedent which was but too often and obstinately imitated in following times.*

No sooner had Sigismund Augustus, the son of the preceding monarch, ascended the throne, than factions were formed against him, because he had

* Paulus Jovius, an Italian writer, and bishop of Nocera at that time, says there were then but three heroes living, Charles V., Francis I., and Sigismund, and that either of them deserved to rule all Europe.

married without the consent and concurrence of the diet. The object of his choice was Barba Radziwill, widow of a Lithuanian noble of no great consequence. This marriage had been contracted secretly before his father's death, but he publicly acknowledged it on coming to the crown. Firm in his affection, and faithful to his vows, he would not break his domestic ties, although his constancy might cost him a kingdom.* The contest did not, however, come to this crisis; for the king dexterously turned the attention of the nobles to their own interests, and heard no more objections to his marriage. But Sigismund did not long enjoy the domestic happiness which he so well deserved; for, in the course of six months, death made him a widower.

Sigismund was not entirely freed from war, but he found time to cultivate the arts of peace very successfully. In this reign Livonia and Courland were annexed to the Polish crown. The order of the Knights of Christ, having the same statutes as the Templars, was founded in 1202 by the Bishop of Riga, who conferred on them the right to a third part of Livonia, which they were to conquer and convert to Christianity; and this grant was also confirmed by the pope. The first grand-master was Winno, who denominated the order *Ensiferi*. In 1238 they formed a solemn compact with the Teutonic knights, and adopted their statutes. They reduced Livonia and Courland, and in 1521 purchased their independence of the grand-master of the Teutonic order. The Reformation began now to spread in Livonia, and greatly weakened the power of the knights. At this time they had imprisoned the Bishop of Riga, Sigismund's cousin, and massacred the envoys whom he sent to demand the release of his kinsman. Sigis-

* The Archbishop of Gnesne was very earnest in pressing him to divorce his wife; and the Bishop of Przemysl is said to have quoted the following lines of Euripides, in defence of the injustice he would do to her.

Εἴπερ γὰρ ἄδικεῖν χρῆ, τυραννίδος περὶ
Κάλλιστον ἄδικεῖν.—Euripid. Phœn. v. 527

mund was arming to wreak vengeance on them, when, dreading the encounter, they submitted and formed an alliance with Poland. The Czar of Moscow, provoked at this step, invaded Livonia; and the knights, not able to defend themselves, sued for assistance from Sigismund, who repelled the Russians. Livonia was surrendered to Poland in 1561; and Kettler, the grand-master, was invested with the duchy of Courland as a fief. He was bound as vassal to furnish the king with 200 horse or 500 infantry, and was not allowed to maintain more than 500 regular troops.

The war in which Sigismund was engaged with the Russians led to a consolidation of the union between Poland and Lithuania. At the commencement of hostilities the czar was victorious, and even invaded Lithuania. The Polish nobles refused to march to the assistance of their fellow-subjects, but under the condition that the union should be consummated. This was readily granted, and in 1569 the desired arrangement was definitely concluded in a diet of both provinces at Lublin. Lithuania was united to Poland under the same laws, privileges, and government. It was agreed that the diets composed of representatives of both these countries should meet at Warsaw, which is a central town, and neither in Poland Proper nor Lithuania, but in Mazovia.

The genius of Copernicus, the great precursor of Newton, had lately shone forth,

— velut inter ignes
Luna minores.

He was born in 1473, at Thorn; where his father, a citizen of Cracow, had settled after the accession of Polish Prussia to Poland. At the age of nineteen he was sent to the university of Cracow,* where he pur-

* It was there that, under the tuition of Albert Brudzewski, Copernicus pursued his mathematical studies. Even at this early period astronomical calendars were annually published at this university; and, to the honour of the professors, they were entirely free from astrological non-

sued his mathematical studies under the noted Brudzewski. Adam Zaluzianski is the Polish Linnæus; and in this same age published a work entitled *Methodus Herbaria*, in which he exhibits his sexual arrangement of plants. There were perhaps more printing-presses at this time in Poland than there have ever been since, or than there were in any other country of Europe at the time. There were eighty-three towns where they printed books; and in Cracow alone there were fifty presses. The chief circumstance which supported so many printing houses in Poland at this time was the liberty of the press; which allowed the publication of writings of all the contending sects, which were not permitted to be printed elsewhere.

Nor were the Poles less advanced in that most enlightened feeling of civilization, religious toleration. When almost all the rest of Europe was deluged with the blood of contending sectaries; while the Lutherans were perishing in Germany; while the blood of above a hundred thousand Protestants, the victims of the war of persecution, and the horrid massacre of St. Bartholomew, was crying from the ground of France against the infamous Triumvirate, and the hypocritical Catharine de Medicis; while Mary made England a fiery ordeal of persecution, and even the heart of the "virgin queen" was not entirely cleansed of the foul stuff of bigotry, but dictated the burnings of the Arians; Poland opened an asylum for the persecuted of all religions, and allowed every man to worship God in his own way. "Mosques," says Rulhière,* "were raised among churches and synagogues. Leopold has always been

sense. The "*Calendriers Cracoviens*" are even still in great repute in Austria.

It is rather a singular coincidence, though perhaps scarcely worth remarking, that Copernicus as well as Newton was concerned with the coinage of his country. He wrote a treatise, "*Sur la Manière d'organiser les Monnaies Polonaises*," which is still in being.

* *Histoire de l'Anarchie de Pologne.*

the seat of three bishops, Greek, Armenian, and Latin; and it was never inquired in which of their three cathedrals any man, who consented to submit to the regulations of government, went to receive the communion. Lastly, when the Reformation was rending so many states into inimical factions, Poland, without proscribing her ancient religion, received into her bosom the two new sects." All parties were allowed a perfect liberty of the press: the Catholics printed their books at Cracow, Posen, Lublin, &c.; while the followers of the Confession of Augsburg published theirs at Paniowica, Dombrowa, and Szamotuly; the Reformers at Pinezow, Brzesc, Knyszyn, and Nieswiez; the Arians at Rakow and Zaslaw; and the Greek sectarians in Lithuania at Ostrow and Wilna.

In 1540 it was ascertained that there were not in the whole of Poland more than 500 Christian merchants and manufacturers; while there were 3200 Jewish, who employed 9600 artisans in working gold, silver, &c., or manufacturing cloths. In the reign of Sigismund Augustus, the Jews were prohibited from dealing in horses or keeping inns.

Such was the state of his kingdom when Sigismund died, in 1572. With this monarch ended the line of kings of the house of Jagellon.

Having thus arrived at another era in our historical narrative, let us cast a brief view on the tract we have travelled over. Under the dynasty of the Jagellons, which lasted 186 years, Poland had attained its perfect growth and dimensions, and its constitution had also arrived at equal maturity. Jewel after jewel has since been stolen from the crown, till it has become but a simple badge of official distinction. There being no third order whom the kings could raise up against the nobles, which would have rendered the monarchy limited, but shielded it from total subjection to the aristocracy, there was no alternative but to make the government a perfect despotism as in

Russia, to preserve the regal authority. This was attempted, as we shall see, in after-years; but the kings who undertook it had not sufficient genius or perseverance, and the aristocracy had attained too great an ascendancy by the diet and confederation. Besides, the chief military forces of the kingdom were not composed of a distinct order, who might be won over to the regal side, but of the nobility and their retainers; nor had the king that powerful engine, wealth, in his power,—all the revenue being at the disposal of the diet, which was composed of the aristocracy. Under these circumstances, the king could only be “a judge,” as one of the future monarchs* expressed himself; and the state that anomaly, a republic of aristocrats.†

CHAPTER III.

Poland becomes an elective Monarchy—Religious Toleration—Henry of Anjou elected—Henry absconds—Stephen Batory—Introduces the Jesuits—Disciplines the Cossacks—Origin, Manners, &c. of the Cossacks—Sigismund III., Prince of Sweden, elected—Sweden revolt, and expel Sigismund—Demetrius, the Russian Impostor—War with Russia—The Poles take Moscow, and carry the Czar Prisoner to Warsaw—A Pole Czar of Russia—Zolkiewski—War with Gustavus Adolphus—Wladislas VII.—The Revolt of the Cossacks—Casimir III.—Charles Gustavus overruns Poland—Is repelled—Treaty of Oliva—Project of Partition—Revolts of the Nobles—Casimir abdicates the Throne—*Liberum Veto*.

SIGISMUND's funeral bell was the tocsin of anarchy in Poland. Being without a male heir, this last of the Jagellons restored the crown to his subjects for their disposal; a trust which occasioned them much

* Henry.

† The state of Poland at the time of Sigismund's death is accurately described in a curious Italian manuscript in the Harleian Collection. It is entitled, “*Relazione di Polonia*,” and the author was an ambassador from Venice to Poland at this period, as he states himself (*perche io sono*

perplexity. The nobles, among whom had sprung up that spirit of equality and jealousy which had so intrenched on the regal authority, would not bend to a rival of their own order; and with the same feeling which has made them in late years rather submit to the domineering and treacherous interference of foreign powers than bear any stretch or even appearance of power in their peers, they preferred to look abroad for a king. The Polish crown thus became a prize of competition for foreign princes, and it still possessed sufficient temptations to have many candidates; for besides the opportunity that a monarch backed with extraneous forces might have of extending the authority, there remained still many important privileges like interstices between the enclosures of the laws. The neighbouring potentates now began a struggle for Poland, and at length the unhappy country became the prey of their conflicting interests in addition to the evils of civil dissension.

During the interregnum which succeeded the death of Sigismund, the Archbishop of Gnesne, on whom the authority devolved at such times, convoked the diet to debate on the choice of a new king. In this meeting, which was held in 1573, the laws were passed which regulated the elections. The motion made by John Zamoyski, representative of Belz, in Gallicia, that all the nobles should have a voice in the nomination, was carried; and it was agreed that they should meet in a plain near Warsaw. In this diet also the coronation-oath, or *pacta conventa*, was revised. The principal articles were the same as have been ever since administered to the kings-elect: stripping the monarch of all active power, making the crown elective, and requiring regular convocations of the diet every two years. They bound him

stato Ambasciadore, &c.) He gives an exact description of the geography, history, commerce, &c., as a preface to the account of the election, which we shall describe in the next chapter. To prevent an interruption of the narrative, we will throw our extracts into the Appendix.

also to observe perfect toleration of religious principles, promising among themselves (*inter nos dissidentes de religione*), as well for themselves as their posterity, never to take up arms on account of diversity in religious tenets. The Roman Catholic, however, remained the state religion, and the kings were bound to be of that profession of faith.

The nobles accordingly assembled at Warsaw, armed, and with all their pomp of retinue. Several candidates were nominated, among whom were Ernest, son of the Emperor Maximilian of Austria, and Henry, Duke of Anjou, son of Catharine de Medicis, and brother of Charles IX., the reigning king of France. The latter was the successful competitor, and an embassy was sent to Paris to announce the decision. We cannot refrain from inserting, at full length, the description given of this Polish deputation by an eyewitness then living at Paris:

“It is impossible to express the general astonishment when we saw these ambassadors in long robes, fur caps, sabres, arrows, and quivers; but our admiration was excessive when we saw the sumptuousness of their equipages, the scabbards of their swords adorned with jewels, their bridles, saddles, and horse-cloths decked in the same way, and the air of consequence and dignity by which they were distinguished. One of the most remarkable circumstances was their facility in expressing themselves in Latin, French, German, and Italian. These four languages were as familiar to them as their vernacular tongue. There were only two men of rank at court who could answer them in Latin, the Baron of Millau and the Marquis of Castelnau-Maurissière. They had been commissioned expressly to support the honour of the French nation, that had reason to blush at their ignorance in this point.—They (the ambassadors) spoke our language with so much purity, that one would have taken them rather for men educated on the banks of the Seine and the Loire, than for inhabit-

ants of the countries which are watered by the Vistula or the Dnieper, which put our courtiers to the blush, who knew nothing, but were open enemies of all science; so that when their guests questioned them, they answered only with signs or blushes."*

Thus was Henry called to the throne, and he who was engaged at the very moment of his election in fighting against the Protestants† now took the oath of toleration to all dissenters and sectaries. He accepted the crown reluctantly; for, although all was ready for the king's departure to Poland, this prince did not hurry to set out. However honourable the object of his voyage, he regarded it as an exile.‡ But no sooner had he reached Poland than he was informed of the death of his brother, and the vacancy of the French throne. Not choosing to forfeit his hereditary right and the substantial authority of the crown of France, and knowing that the Poles would not allow him to swerve from his oath, which bound him to reside in Poland, he took the singular resolution to abscond, and leave the country by stealth. He was overtaken a few leagues from Cracow by one of the Polish nobles, but resolutely refused to return.§

This singular and unexpected event renewed the factions, some of which called Maximilian of Austria to the throne, but were at last obliged to yield to the opposite party, who chose Anne, the sister of Sigismund, and Stephen Batory, Duke of Transylvania, for her husband, A. D. 1575.

This prince was possessed of rare qualities and high talent, having raised himself by his valour, and

* *Histoire de J. A. De Thou, &c.*

† He was besieging Rochelle, which was in the possession of the Huguenots.

‡ De Thou, vol. iv. liv. 22.

§ The *Relazione di Polonia*, mentioned in the preceding chapter, contains a full account of this proceeding, which, as the author says, is so singular, that "non si trova in alcun istoria antica o moderna un caso tale."

without the least violence or collusion, to the dukedom of Transylvania; and he was now called spontaneously to the Polish throne. Nor did he degenerate after his exaltation, vanquishing the Russians in a series of battles, distinguished by striking features of barbarity on the side of the enemy, and valour, chastened with mercy, on that of Batory. Peace was at length concluded by the interposition of Possevin, the Jesuit, and legate from the pope.

This was the circumstance which gave the Jesuits an introduction into Poland. Their order was then only noted for its learning; and Batory, imagining he was acting for the improvement of his people, intrusted to them the care of the university of Wilna, which he had just founded. Succeeding years, however, showed them in a very different character in Poland from teachers and peacemakers.

But the most politic act of this king was the addition to the strength of the nation, effected by establishing a standing army, and introducing an improved discipline. He now also brought the Cossacks under some military order. It was that Cossack tribe called Zaporog (Cosaci Zaporohenses) that was thus rendered serviceable to Poland. They inhabited, or rather frequented, the islands and swamps of the Dnieper, which formed a barrier against their warlike neighbours. In the reign of Sigismund I. they were first armed against the Tartars, and a Polish officer, Daszkiewicz, was appointed their governor; but no further notice was taken of them till the time of Batory. The absurd and monstrous descriptions of this people and their manners, which were founded on rumour, have been fully credited by modern writers; and Voltaire, who is one of the greatest among fabulists, does not fail to magnify the wonders.* We shall endeavour to throw a little clearer light on the manners of this

* See History of Russia, and Charles XII., book 4.

tribe, from old authors of credit. The first is Chevalier, who wrote a history of a war of the Cossacks, which will shortly come under our notice, prefaced with remarks on their manners and government gleaned from actual experience.* The Cossacks were the southern borderers of Poland, and, like all other people similarly situated, were continually carrying on an irregular and predatory war; hence their name, which implies *plunderers*.† The Ukraine also means *frontier country*, and, in course of time, all its inhabitants were designated Cossacks. "They were," says Chevalier, "only a military body, and not a nation, as some have imagined. We cannot compare them better than to the 'Francarchers' formerly established in France by Charles VII." They made periodical naval expeditions every season against the Turks, and have even advanced within two leagues of Constantinople. Their rendezvous was in the islands of the Dnieper; and when winter approached, they returned to their homes. They generally mustered 5000 or 6000 men; their boats were sixty feet long, with ten or twelve oars on each side, but this must be understood only of their war-boats.

The other author whom we shall quote was one who lived at that period, and frequently had the command of the Cossack troops, no less than the father of the famous Sobieski. Even then, it seems, they were the subject of curiosity and fable.‡ "I will describe," says he, "their origin, manners, and cus-

* The editor of the *Tableau de la Pologne* seems to imagine he is the first who has noticed Chevalier's work; in this, however, he is mistaken, for the author of that heterogeneous compilation, *The History of Poland*, vol. xxxiv. of the *Universal History*, quotes it, or rather misquotes it.—See *Tableau de la Pologne*, Chodzko's edition, vol. i. p. 464, and *Univ. Hist.* vol. xxxiv. p. 155. Chevalier's book was published at Paris in 1663.

† Other interpretations are given by some authors, but seemingly far-fetched.

‡ One of his expressions is, *quandoquidem hactenus longè latèque per varias gentes famam eorum pervagari cognoscamus*.

toms, which I am acquainted with by hearsay, and have myself witnessed. They are chiefly of Russian origin, though many criminal refugees from Poland, Germany, &c. are to be found among them. They profess the religion of the Greek Church.—They have fixed their residence in those naturally fortified places which are watered by the Dniester.—Their business is war, and when they are shut up, as it were, in their nest (*tanquam nidulo aliquo affixi*), they consider it illegal to neglect athletic sports for any other pursuits. They live sparingly, by hunting and fishing.—They support their wives and families with plunder.* They are governed by a præfect (hetman), whose sceptre is a reed, and who is chosen by acclamation in a tumultuous manner.—He has absolute power of life and death. He has four town counsellors.—The Poles have given them the Trychtymirow, in Kiovia.—Long habit has fitted them for maritime warfare. They use boats, on the sides of which they can occasionally fasten flat bundles of reeds, to buoy them up, and resist the violence of the waves and winds. With these boats they sail with great rapidity, and very often take the laden Turkish vessels. Not many of them use lances (*frameis*), but they are all furnished with arquebuses (*sclopetis*);† and in this kind of warfare the kings of Poland can match the infantry of all the monarchs in the world. They fortify their camps with wagons ranged in several rows; this they call *tabor*, and make them their last refuge from an overbearing enemy. The Poles were obliged to furnish them with arms, provisions, and forage for

* *Partâ toties prædâ locupletati, rei tantum economicæ cum uxoribus et liberis operam navant.*—P. 112. *Comment. Chotin. Bell.* How different is this from Voltaire's account, "Ils ne souffrent point de femmes chez eux, mais ils vont enlever tous les enfants à vingt et trente lieues à la ronde, &c."—*Hist. of Charles XII. book 4.*

† This, it must be remembered, was in the time of James Sobieski, after Batory had disciplined them.

their horses.”* Such were the men whom Batory enlisted in the Polish service. In the year 1576 he divided them into six regiments, and appointed superior and subordinate officers over them. “They were then only infantry,” says Chevalier, “but Batory joined to them 2000 horse, and in a short time they consisted chiefly of cavalry.” Their chief was called *hetman*, or *attaman*; and the king presented him with the following articles as ensigns of authority,—a flag, a horse-tail, a staff, and a mirror. Rozynski was their first hetman appointed by Batory.

It is said that the king had formed the design of extending the regal authority, but death frustrated it in 1586. Few monarchs are more respected by the Poles than the one whom we have just described; and, compared with many of the Polish sovereigns, he certainly deserved the title conferred on him, “*In republicâ plus quàm rex.*”

Violent factions, in consequence of this event, were formed at the diet of election, and both Maximilian of Austria, and Sigismund, Prince of Sweden, were next elected to the throne. Sigismund’s party prevailed, and took Maximilian prisoner, A. D. 1587. The successful competitor did not make an ungenerous use of his advantage, but liberated him, and rejected the offered ransom, saying, “I will not add insult to misfortune. I shall give Maximilian his liberty, and not oblige him to buy it.”†

* *Commentariorum Chotinensis Belli Libri Tres*, Auctore Jacobo Sobieski. Dantisci, 1646. We had almost claimed the credit of being the first to make known these accounts of the Cossacks, and expose the fabulous stories about them, when we perceived that Salvandy had been before us in quoting Sobieski’s book, and he particularly scouts Voltaire’s fables. We must take the liberty of noticing one little mistranslation and anachronism. The Cossacks’ “*sclopeta*” were not “*pistolets*.”—*Salvandy’s Hist. de Pologne avant et sous le Roi Jean Sobieski*. 1829. Vol. i. p. 205.

† Ciampi has published at Florence a Latin manuscript on the struggle between Maximilian and Sigismund. It is *adæporos*; but the editor attributes it to John Michael Bruto, the Venetian, who was engaged by Batory to write a history of Poland. The narrative unfortunately breaks off at the captivity of Maximilian

Sigismund's family was related to the Jagellons on the female side, which reconciled the Poles to his accession. His reign commenced with war; for the Turks, continually harassed by the Cossacks, and not being able to revenge themselves on that vagrant people any more than if they were an annoying swarm of locusts, called the Poles to account for the actions of their dependants. After considerable slaughter, which was interesting only to the victors and the victims, and of no service but to rid the Ukraine of a few thousand cut-throat robbers, peace was effected by the intervention of an English ambassador.

Sigismund's father dying about this time, the Swedish crown was bequeathed to the Polish king; but the Swedes, who had adopted the reformed religion of Luther ever since the time of Gustavus, were apprehensive of the government of a Roman Catholic, as Sigismund was, and as he was obliged to declare himself before he could ascend the Polish throne. Nor were their fears groundless, for his very first acts were a bad omen for the Protestant religion.* He was accompanied by a popish legate, by whose advice he demanded that there should be a Roman Catholic chapel in every town, and expressed his determination to be crowned by the pope's deputy. This was borne with impatience; but when the king attempted to enforce his will with Polish troops, the murmur of discontent was raised to the shout of rebellion, and all the attempts of the bigot king to trample down the Swedes to obedience were of no avail.

Sigismund's attention was now directed to the singular events which occurred at this time in Russia; and he furnished Demetrius, a young claimant of the czarship, with assistance to obtain his pretended rights. The story of this impostor

* Puffendorf.

(for such he seems to be now generally confessed) forms another chapter for the Romance of History. The czar, John II. of Russia, left at his death a son, Demetrius, only nine years old, and another of the name of Theodore, twenty. The latter succeeded his father, and Demetrius was intrusted to the care of his mother, who devoted herself to his education in the retired castle of Uglitz. Theodore married the sister of Boris, one of his chief officers, whom he loaded with favours. The ingrate's ambition was only sharpened by his exaltation, and on the death of his master there would be no obstacle to his ascent to the throne but Demetrius. This was soon removed; there was no difficulty in finding

“A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Quoted and signed to do a deed of shame;”

and the youth disappeared. Boris at length obtained the crown, but found it a crown of thorns. The dreadful visions which “murder the curtained sleep” of guilt haunted the royal assassin, and something more than a phantom “shouted in his ear”. Demetrius! The king was told that he was still alive, and that another child had been the victim of his ambition. A Demetrius was at this time in Poland, and he armed against Boris enemies more powerful over a villain than remorse of conscience. This young man merely repeated the comedy, or rather tragedy, of errors which was played by the slave Clemens in the time of Tiberius,* and by Perkin Warbeck in the reign of Henry VII. It seems that he was originally a monk of the same age that his prototype would have been; and, as the story runs, he also resembled him in two singular particulars,—one arm shorter than the other, and a wart on his cheek. This coincidence probably first urged him to commence the imposture, and the unsettled state of

* The description of this singular imposture is given in Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii. cap. 39 and 40.

Russia and the difficulty of being detected might have encouraged him in the design. He in course of time took refuge with Mniszech, palatine of Sandomir in Poland, who was a designing, bad character, and promised him assistance provided he would tolerate the Roman Catholic religion in Russia, and marry his daughter Mariana. Sigismund could not openly advocate the cause of the impostor, but allowed his nobles to do so; and by their aid Demetrius was seated on the Russian throne. His reign did not last long, for the Russians rebelled and murdered him with a great number of his Polish adherents. But the soul of Demetrius had a second and even a third* metempsychosis; and the last impostor was equally defended and patronised by the Poles as the first. Mariana received him as a restitution from the grave,† and Mniszech as another stepping-stone to power to supply the place of the former. Sigismund, urged on by the Jesuits, who were now in his full confidence, and further stimulated by the ambition of conquering Russia, invaded that country, pretending that he came as an avenger of his murdered subjects. Zolkiewski,‡ who, as his kinsman writes, was made both chancellor and grand-general (*ob sua insignia in rempublicam merita*), commanded the troops, and entering Moscow, took prisoner Basil Schouïsky, the new czar, and his brother. The king's son, Wladislas, was set on the throne, and thus Poland was once the disposer of that crown which is now worn by its despot. He was, however, soon deposed, and Sigismund did not attempt to reinstate him. Zolkiewski had the honour of entering Warsaw with a Russian czar in his train,

* This farce was acted even the fourth time.

† This circumstance exposes more than any thing else the deception of the Mniszech family. Ciampi, to whom we have before alluded, has published an "Esame Critico," with unedited documents concerning the history of Demetrius, but as our limits do not allow any digressions, we must leave the reader to form his own opinion on its merits.

‡ The maternal great-grandfather of John Sobieski.

and leaving monuments of his victories, which have been the objects of the petty spite of Peter the Great and Catharine.*

Sigismund had not abandoned his plan of regaining the crown of Sweden, and with this view he joined with Ferdinand, the Emperor of Germany, and assisted him against the voyvode of Transylvania, who opposed him. The Transylvanian was in alliance with the sultan, and urged him to make a diversion on the side of Moldavia, which at that time was under the power of the Turks. The Palatine of Moldavia had invited the Poles to his assistance, and accordingly the famous Zolkiewski, the conqueror of Russia, marched into that country with 8000 regular troops, and irregular forces of Cossacks and Moldavian refugees amounting to about 20,000. The Turkish army was chiefly composed of Tartars, and numbered nearly 70,000. Zolkiewski, notwithstanding the disparity of forces, obliged the Tartars to give way; but being almost abandoned by his auxiliaries, and his little band being reduced to little better than 5000, he was obliged to retreat. Like all experienced generals, Zolkiewski could play the losing as well as the winning game; and an eight days' march in the face of a numerous army, used to irregular warfare, must have required some tactics

* In the chapel at Warsaw, formerly belonging to the Dominicans, were deposited the remains of these illustrious captives. The ashes were given up to the Russians at the peace of 1634, but the monument still remained. In the reign of Stanislaus Augustus, Catharine ordered her ambassador Repnin to break the marble tablet bearing the invidious inscription following:

Jesu Christi Dei Filii

Regis regum Dei exercituum gloriæ,

Sigismundus III., rex Poloniae et Sueciae,

Exercitu Moschovitico ad Clusinum caeso, Moscoviae Metropoli deditione accepta, Smolensco Reipublicae restituto.

Basileo Szuyscio magno duci Moscoviae, et fratri ejus Demetrio militia praefecto, captivis jure belli receptis, et in arce Gostinensi sub custodia habitis, ibique vita functis, &c.

In the *Chateau Royal* of Warsaw there was a painting representing the captivity of the same persons, which Peter caused to be destroyed in the time of Augustus II.

and management. Historians compare this retrograde movement to "the Retreat of the Ten Thousand;" and no doubt the Polish grand-general, if he had boasted a Greek tongue and a Greek sword would have made as wonderful a narrative as Xenophon. But Zolkiewski was to suffer a different fate; for when the troops had reached the Dniester, they were panicstruck at the sight of the enemy, and fled in disorder. "Zolkiewski," says the Polish historian,* "like Paulus Æmilius, disdained to survive his defeat, and with the same valour which had marked his life he fell fighting for his country, and covered with wounds, on the banks of the Dniester, near the town of Mohilow." His son was taken prisoner, but both bodies were redeemed and buried in the same grave, with this inscription:

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.

This voice from the tomb urged their descendant Sobieski to exact retribution from the Turks.†

This was only the signal for fresh war: the sultan now headed his troops in person, but was eventually obliged to make peace.‡

While the Poles were thus engaged in the south, the Swedes were making inroads in the north. Sigismund had not quietly given up the crown of Sweden; but although his exertions were fruitless, he still cherished the hope of recovering it. The Polish king found an opponent in Gustavus Adolphus, who was now on the throne, and who withstood, not merely the Poles, but almost all continental Europe, at least the Catholic part. Livonia, the point of junction between the two kingdoms, was the seat of war. After some trifling struggles, Gustavus took the field in 1626, and laid siege to Riga. This

* James Sobieski.

† Coyer, *Vie de Sobieski*.

‡ The particulars of this war are recorded by James Sobieski in *his* work before quoted.

town surrendered in six weeks, and the Swedish king drove out the Jesuits, who were its perpetual tormentors. But Sigismund was too stubborn to be taught the inutility of resisting the great Gustavus; he would not see in him any thing but a young hot-headed competitor, and not the determined champion of the "Thirty Years' War." Battle lost after battle increased the demands of the Swedes, and lessened the power of the Poles. The Polish king was also the dupe of the courts of Vienna and Madrid, whose interest it was to make him divert Gustavus from the rest of Europe, and in consequence they promised to assist him with money and troops. These promises were never kept, and Sigismund continued obstinately to gnaw the file. The city of Dantzic, however, defended itself very vigorously; the Swedish admiral was killed, and Gustavus obliged to raise the siege. But the continued run of ill-fortune at length opened the eyes of the Poles to their own folly and the treachery of their pretended allies; and Sigismund was happy to make peace for six years, by which he resigned Livonia and part of Prussia, in 1629.

Sigismund terminated this reign of trouble in 1632. Ever the dupe of the Jesuits, who were in his perfect confidence, he lost one kingdom and weakened another which was so unfortunate as to continue under his power. Poland, the land of toleration, was now the scene of religious contest, and the Protestants were deprived of all places of trust and power. General dissatisfaction resulted, and the nobles had formed a confederation against their king in 1607; but not being very resolute, they failed in carrying their point. In 1609 these confederations were authorized by law. The spirit of contention, however, still continued to divide house against house, and the father against his son; intolerance added to the serf's chains, and put an embargo on commerce. Such were the effects for which Poland

was indebted to Sigismund III. He not only committed actual injury, but sowed fresh seeds by intrusting great power to the Jesuits. "He had, in short," says a French writer, "two faults, which generally occasion great misfortunes,—he was very silly, and very obstinate."

Some time after the accession of Wladislas VII., son of Sigismund, to the throne, died Gustavus Adolphus, which event enabled the Poles to oblige the Swedes to resign their conquests, and make a firmer peace in 1635, at Stumsdorf. Had all the acts of the new king been dictated by the same good policy, Poland would have been saved much loss of strength and influence.

The Polish nobles were jealous of the independence of the Cossacks, so different from the state of their own serfs; the Jesuits could not bear to tolerate them in their adherence to the doctrines of the Greek church, and longed to make them Catholics; the king, perhaps, was swayed by both reasons; so that the sovereign, nobles, and Jesuits all united to prune the almost lawless freedom of that wild but useful tribe, and from this time may be dated their alienation from the Polish interest. Wladislas ordered forts to be erected in the Ukraine to awe them; and the Cossacks armed in defence of their right, but were defeated. In defiance of treaties, the Poles villanously butchered their hetman and many other prisoners. A compact made after this, binding the victors to withdraw their troops and restore the Cossacks to their full liberty, was as soon broken; the diet ordered the number of forces in the Ukraine to be increased, and that they should be reduced to the same state of subjection as the serfs. The Polish nobles seemed to imagine that oaths and engagements were not binding with uncivilized people; for they committed all kinds of outrages on them, both personal and general: at length an act of intolerable injustice drove the Cossacks again to rebel

and they were obtaining many advantages when death carried off their tyrant, Wladislas, in 1648.

But the former bigot was succeeded by another: John Casimir, younger brother of the late king, was called to occupy the throne just vacated. Casimir was a Jesuit by principle, education, and character; and the pope gave him a cardinal's hat, to free him from his religious ties that he might assume the crown.

Under this king the Cossacks were as badly treated as under his predecessor. The Polish nobles continued to oppress them, and Casimir connived at the injustice; at length, however, a notorious act of villany roused them to revolt. Chmielnicki, a man of some influence in the Ukraine, was deprived of a small tract of land by the Polish governor; and resenting the oppression, asserted his right, and taunted that officer as a tyrannical upstart. The governor, incensed at his resistance, imitated the violence of the other Polish nobles, carried off Chmielnicki's wife, and set fire to his house, in which his infant child perished. Chmielnicki drew his sword to revenge his wife's dishonour and his child's death, and joined the rebel Cossacks, who made him their leader. It was about this time that Casimir came to the throne, and feeling that the Cossacks were the aggrieved party, he refused to prosecute the war, but endeavoured to conciliate them by writing to the hetman and confirming him in his office. The Cossack chief withdrew his forces, and negotiations were in progress; but the nobles, confederating at the instigation of the aristocrats, put an end to these pacific measures with the sword. The Cossacks taught the Poles that they could defend their own liberty as well as that of their former allies and present oppressors. The rebel forces left behind them a wake of blood and devastation. They advanced into Poland, and even invested the king in his camp at Zborow. The Cossacks were credulous; and believing a people who had deceived them

so often, consented to negotiate. It was then agreed, in 1649, that they should have the free use of their privileges and religion.*

This treaty did not satisfy the nobles, who were both foiled in their undertaking and humiliated by their defeat; they therefore determined to pay no more attention to it than the preceding agreements. Before the end of the year, the diet announced its intention of reducing the Cossacks to obedience. Casimir made the expedition quite a crusade, and received a sacred helmet and sword from Pope Innocent X. His preparations were on as great a scale as if he designed the subjugation of a powerful nation, instead of a few thousand rebels, as they denominated the Cossacks; besides an army of 100,000 nobles, he assembled a body of 50,000 of the foreign troops who had fought in the thirty years' war. The hetman, not terrified at this gigantic armament, allied himself with the cham of the Tartars, and encountered the Poles. Victory declared in favour of the oppressors, and the Cossacks were dispersed; but the hetman had yet sufficient resources to obtain a peace in 1651. Submission to despotism is a distasteful lot, and happily cannot, under any circumstances, be made a duty by the strictest treaties or vows, according to the well-known principle of moral philosophy, that improper promises are not binding; so thought the Cossacks without the aid of a system of ethics, and submitted to the Russians in 1654. Alexis was then czar: he gladly received his new subjects; and assigning, as a pretext for war, an omission which the Poles had made in one of his titles, marched two armies into Poland, one towards Smolensko, and the other towards Kiow.

While the Russians were ravaging the east, another and no less formidable enemy was arming on

* The history of this war is given by Chevalier in the work before quoted.

the north. Casimir, who sunk beneath the burden of one crown, would not resign the family pretensions to another,—that of Sweden; and when Christina, abdicating about this time, appointed her cousin, Charles Gustavus, her heir, he protested vehemently against the succession. Charles Gustavus armed in defence of his right; and perceiving that in one of the letters from Casimir, only two *et ceteras* were used after his titles, instead of three, made it a pretext for declaring war. It is supposed that he was also instigated by the Polish vice-chancellor, whose wife the cardinal-king, Casimir, had seduced; and who was afterward banished, and took refuge at Stockholm. Charles Gustavus marched into Poland with 60,000 troops; discontent and revolt increased their number with Poles, and the Swede entered Warsaw. The contemptible John Casimir fled to Silesia, and Charles Gustavus was master of Poland. But the nobles were soon disgusted with their new tyrant; and in 1656 they confederated in Gallicia, and Casimir joined the confederacy. Fortune smiled still more favourably: Alexis, jealous of the growing power of Sweden, withdrew his troops; and even the hetman, who had received an envoy from Casimir, was satiated with revenge, and retired to the Ukraine. Charles was obliged to retrace his steps, and Casimir reached Warsaw again. It is pretended that Charles Gustavus now proposed a partition of Poland between Prussia and Austria; but, fortunately for the kingdom, the czar declared war against Sweden, and diverted the conqueror from his design. The Elector of Brandenburg concluded a treaty of peace at Wehlau on the 19th of September, 1657, satisfied with obtaining the independence of Ducal Prussia. Austria offered assistance now the danger was over; and the treaty of Oliva was concluded on the 3d of May, 1660, between Poland, Prussia, and Sweden. Casimir resigned all pretensions to the Swedish crown, and ceded Livonia to

Sweden. It must not be forgotten, that the *et ceteras* of the King of Sweden's title were arranged to his satisfaction in one of the articles of this treaty. Part of the third article runs, "Dictis vero titulis et insignibus non utentur ad serenissimos reges regnumque Sueciæ in literis aliisve diplomatibus aut scriptis, sed observabitur ab utrinque receptus hactenus modus abbreviandorum titulorum cum et cæterationibus, ita ut post verba Magnus Dux Lithuanix tres et cæterationes in titulo serenissimi moderni Regis Poloniæ et vicissim post verba Magnus Princeps Finlandiæ, tres et cæterationes in titulo serenissimi Regis Sueciæ adficiantur."

Thus was Casimir freed from this terrible coalition which had threatened to forestall the fate of his unfortunate kingdom.* But even before the treaty of Oliva was concluded, the Poles, instead of conciliating all parties, passed a decree in the diet against

* Rulhière tells us that a Swedish ambassador was employed to propose secretly a treaty between Austria, Sweden, and Prussia, to divide Poland between them. "I have discovered," says he, "this important, and till now unknown circumstance, in the archives of foreign affairs in France." He does not, however, give his authorities; and the following extracts from the French ambassador's despatches expose a rather different combination of circumstances.

"They (the Poles) wish to get rid of the aid of Austria, which gives them much more trouble than advantage. They know that the emperor and the Elector of Brandenburg wish for a continuation of the war, with the view that Poland must necessarily fall into their hands," since Charles Gustavus would be engaged in opposing Russia.

"From the camp before Thorn,

"2 Nov. 1658."

"The Austrian ministers will take every opportunity to throw new difficulties in the way of the treaty, and the Russians to break that which they made at Wilna, and to ally themselves with the Swedes. What gives the Poles the more apprehension is, the information they have received that the czar has a treaty in hand with Sweden.—The house of Austria, which advises this nomination (the succession of the czar to the Polish throne) which it would not wish to take place, flatters itself with the hope of then seeing the Poles obliged to submit to it for protection against the grand-duke, or that he will be reduced to the necessity of sharing the kingdom with her, and will be contented with a part, not being able to have the whole.

"From the camp before Thorn,

"26 Oct. 1658."

From the despatches of De Lumbres, the French ambassador to Poland; among the Harleian Manuscripts.

the Arians, most of whom had sided with Sweden, and persecuted them with confiscation, exile, and death. Another rupture also broke out with the Cossacks; the haughty nobles infringed on the treaty they had made with them in 1658, and the Ukraine again submitted to Russia. "Since then," says Salvandy, "Warsaw has seen them keeping guard at the gates of her palace."

The Poles kept the Russians at bay, and the famous John Sobieski distinguished himself in these campaigns; but they were obliged to make peace in 1667. By the treaty, Severia and the Ukraine, on the east of the Dnieper, were ceded to Russia; the Cossacks (Zaporienses) were to be under the joint dominion of both states, ready to serve against the Turks when required, and were to have the free exercise of their religion.

This reign was as unfortunate in its internal policy as in its foreign relations. The king was entirely at the mercy of his queen, his mistresses, and the Jesuits. Many of the nobles, during the Swedish invasion, had urged the necessity of choosing a successor to the throne who might be able to fight their cause; and many went so far as to wish the monarchy to become hereditary.* The emperor was proposed by many; but the queen, Maria Louisa, exerted herself to ensure the succession to the French prince Condé, and in the diet of 1661 the king himself made the proposal. This unconstitutional proceeding produced great murmurs among the nobles; the diet was dissolved; and the seeds of serious revolt were thus

* "I have seen some of the Polish ministers, who have stated, that if the war continues with Sweden, &c., they shall be obliged to elect a successor who will be capable of re-establishing their affairs, and they see none who is more able to do so than the Archduke Leopold.—Besides, the vice-chancellor, who follows this party, did not hesitate to say that the liberty of the Poles was prejudicial to them, and that it was desirable they should have an hereditary king."—*De Lumbres*, 21 Feb. 1657, *MS. Despatches*.

sown which harassed Casimir during the rest of his reign.*

Casimir, worn out by these and other troubles, took the resolution of resigning the sceptre which he could not wield, and resuming his religious habit. He had been told in the diet "that the calamities of Poland could not end but with his reign;" and he addressed that diet in the following words:—

"PEOPLE OF POLAND,

"It is now two hundred and eighty years that you have been governed by my family. The reign of my ancestors is past, and mine is going to expire. Fatigued by the labours of war, the cares of the cabinet, and the weight of age; oppressed with the burdens and solitudes of a reign of more than twenty-one years;—I, your king and father, return into your hands what the world esteems above all things—a crown; and choose for my throne six feet of earth, where I shall sleep in peace with my fathers."

After his abdication he retired to France, where he was made abbot of the monastery of St. Germain-des-Prés.

It was in this king's reign that the *liberum veto*, or privilege of the deputies to stop all proceedings in the diet by a simple dissent, first assumed the form of a legal custom. "The leaven of superstition and bigotry," says Rulhière,† "began to ferment and

* In this diet Casimir pronounced these remarkable words, which have been construed as a singular prophecy of the dismemberment of Poland: "I hope I may be a false prophet in stating that you have to fear the dismemberment of the republic. The Russians (Moscus et Russi) will attempt to seize the grand-duchy of Lithuania as far as the rivers Bug and Narew, and almost to the Vistula. The Elector of Brandenburg will have a design on Greater Poland and the neighbouring palatinates, and will contend for the aggrandizement of both Prussias. The house of Austria will turn its attention to Cracow and the adjacent palatinates." Rulhière pretends that Casimir had the mysterious treaty in his eye when he spoke these prophetic words; but a more natural solution of the question is found in the letters before mentioned, which show that the apprehensions Casimir expresses were not confined to him.

† *Histoire de l'Anarchie de Pologne*, vol. i. p. 42.

blend itself with all the other vices of the constitution; they then became closely united, and their junction defied all remedy. It was then that in the bosom of the national assembly sprung up this singular anarchy, which, under the pretext of making the constitution more firm, has destroyed in Poland all sovereign power.—The right of single opposition to general decrees, although always admitted, was for a long time not acted upon. There remained but one step to complete the destructive system, and that was taken in 1652, under the reign of John Casimir. A Polish noble named Sizinski, whom his contemporaries have denounced to the indignation of posterity, having left the diet at the period allotted for its resolutions, and by his voluntary absence preventing the possibility of any unanimity, the diet considered that it had lost its power by the desertion of this one deputy.” A precedent so absurd, but so easily imitated, could not fail to have the most pernicious effects.

There can only be one opinion on this king's reign: he deserves any character rather than that of “the Polish Solomon;” nor can we agree with the whole of the assertion that

“He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again,
And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
He reign'd in most unseemly quiet.”*

His reign, unfortunately for Poland, was any thing but an “unseemly quiet,” and has added another proof of the bad effects of ingrafting the sceptre on the crosier.

The introduction of the Jesuits by Batory had a great effect on the progress of learning in Poland. The curious, however, count up 711 Polish authors in the reign of Sigismund III. The Polish language became more generally diffused in Lithuania, Gal-

* Mazeppa.

licia, Volhynia, &c., where formerly the Russian was the prevalent dialect. The close intercourse which commenced with France during the unfortunate administration of John Casimir introduced many of the comforts of civilization; travelling was improved in Poland, inns were built on the high roads, and carriages came into general use. But sadly did learning languish in this stormy reign. The incursions of the Swedes, Cossacks, and Tartars swept away the libraries, broke up all literary society, and commerce shared the same fate.

CHAPTER IV.

Michael Wiśniowiecki elected—Intrigues against him—War with Turkey—Treaty of Buczacz—Royal Confederation—Treaty broken—Death of Michael—Battle of Chocim—Election of Sobieski—Sobieski's Ancestry—Life, &c.—Battle of Leopol—Coronation—Sobieski's Danger—Treaty of Zuranow—Alliance with Austria—Siege of Vienna—Sobieski succours Vienna and defeats the Turks—Leopold's Ingratitude—Sobieski defeated by the Turks—Consequences of this War—Intrigues—War renewed—Complaints of the Diet—Religious Persecution—Sobieski takes the Jews into favour—Disorders of the Government—Sobieski dies.

MANY were found ready to take up the crown which Casimir had laid down; and among other candidates appeared the eldest son of the czar, the Duke of Neuburg, Prince Charles of Lorraine, and the Prince of Condé. But neither of these was considered an eligible person; and faction, which makes nations the dupes of trivial circumstances and feeble individuals, raised an obscure monk to the sovereignty. This event seems to have disappointed more than the ostensible competitors. The "famous" John Sobieski, who was now both grand-general and grand-marshal, which offices gave him almost absolute power both in civil and military affairs,

“———thought one step higher
Would set *him* highest,”

and was secretly clearing the way to take this decisive step. He succeeded so far as to persuade the Poles to reject the foreigners and choose a Piast;* but not the individual whom the great general wished to introduce. “If at this juncture,” says his biographer,† “he flattered himself with the hopes of the crown, the illusion was of short duration.” A tumultuous movement, which was of uncertain origin, called to the throne a Polish gentleman, obscure, unknown, and deformed, who was not invested with any office, who had never transacted any public business, and who himself rejected this unexpected honour with a shudder of apprehension. Michael Koribut Wiegnowiecki was descended from the Jagellons; but shrinking from the field of strife which had led his ancestors to the throne, he shut himself up in a monastery of Warsaw, in hope that he might live unmolested, and go down to the grave unobserved. He was almost dragged to the throne, and wept at being obliged to bear what so many were longing for, 1669. Casimir, on being informed of his late subjects’ choice, said, “What! have they set the crown upon the head of that poor fellow?” Subsequent events proved that the ex-king was right in his hinted apprehensions.

The senators, foiled by this nomination of the inferior nobles, took every opportunity of exhibiting the king’s weakness. Michael too gave them many grounds for complaint; he paid no regard to the *pacta conventa*, and married an Austrian princess, the archduchess Eleanora, without consulting the diet. The Cossacks, revolting, and being beaten by Sobieski, sued for aid from Turkey.

At this time numerous intrigues were secretly

* The party in favour of a native Pole was already formed by the nobles, who were enraged at the intrigues of the late queen with France.

† Coyer.

fomenting, and among others one with Sobieski at its head, to depose Michael and set a French prince on the throne. This was a faction of the aristocrats against the inferior nobles (*la noblesse*); Sobieski carried on a correspondence with Louis XIV., and invited him to name a king for Poland, to curb the license of the diet,—in fact, to use his own words, “to deliver the republic from the absurd tyranny of a plebeian nobility.”*

The approach of Mahomet suspended these intrigues for a time. Sobieski, the champion of Poland, again took the field; but in vain did he rally his little army. Kamieniec, a strong town and fortress in Podolia, in fact the only well-fortified place the Poles possessed, fell into the hands of the Turks on the 27th of August, 1672; and in September Mahomet encamped under the walls of Leopold, the capital of Galicia. The *pospolite*, whom Michael had hastily assembled, imagining that the aristocrats were treacherously concerned in this invasion, confederated at Golembe to defend their king. Michael, alarmed at having the Moslems in such close vicinity, made proposals to the sultan for peace, which were accepted. This disgraceful treaty of Buczacz alienated from Poland the Ukraine and Podolia, and made Michael a tributary vassal of Mahomet;† who, satisfied with this success, and harassed by Sobieski, withdrew his troops. The aristocratical party protested vehemently against this treaty, and the breach of privilege committed by the king in signing it without consent of the diet, although they were the very persons who had lately planned the abolition of the elective and inert monarchy. The confederates, however, firmly defended the act; and so violent were they, that they condemned a hundred of the most illustrious nobles to death, and enjoined all

* Sobieski's letter to Louis XIV. of the 14th July, 1672.—See Rulhière, vol. i. p. 53.

† He was to pay 22,000 ducats annually.

others to subscribe to the confederacy under the same penalty. They summoned Sobieski to appear before them; but with difficulty could he save the messengers from the vengeance of his soldiers, who swore to a man to defend their favourite leader. Winter advanced and dispersed the confederacies; and in the beginning of 1673, all parties agreed to a meeting for the object of pacification.

At the opening of the assembly, an obscure individual announced that he had an important communication to make, no less than that Sobieski had sold his country to the sultan for twelve millions. Hundreds of voices immediately demanded vengeance on the man who dared to calumniate their great general; but he came in person to Warsaw to defend himself. The entrance of the illustrious culprit into the city was a triumph; the king, hating him as he did, sent to compliment him, and the convocation looked upon him with that reverence which master minds always exact from ordinary intellects. According to his advice, the convocation dissolved into a regular diet; and even those now crouched before him who had lately impeached him. The accuser was condemned to capital punishment; but Sobieski's authority and clemency arrested the sentence. The diet declared for war.

Michael indeed still wore the crown, but Sobieski wielded the sceptre. He set out to encounter the Turks, who came to claim the tribute, payment of which was neglected; and came up with them near Chocim, in November, 1673. "My comrades," said he, as he beheld their immense and gorgeous camp, "in half an hour we shall lodge under those gilded tents;" and he kept his word. "The day of Chocim," says Salvandy,* "was too great to be counted

* *Histoire de Pologne avant et sous le Roi Jean Sobieski*, par N. A. de Salvandy, vol. ii. p. 153.

This attractive work, if read with the restrictions contained in an excellent critique in the *Revue Encyclopedique*, vol. xliii. p. 438, will

in this sad reign." Disease, which had long preyed on Michael, carried him off on the very eve of the battle. In framing our opinion of this king's character, we must do him the justice to remember, that even a great man would have found it difficult to hold a consistent course in the midst of circumstances so trying as those in which he was thrown. The Poles, too, had no reason to complain; they had forced the crown on his head in spite of his unwillingness to accept it.

Sobieski now played his part well; he took every precaution to throw obstacles in the way of his competitors; and at length, when the elective diet was in a state of hesitation, he took them by surprise and carried his point. His friend and partisan, Jablonski, palatine of Polish Russia, thus addressed the assembly:

"Having arrived at the close of this stormy discussion, we have all agreed what kind of a king our present circumstances demand. We know that the crown is a heavy burden, and it remains to see who has most strength to bear it.—We can have a chief, a companion and judge of our labours, a citizen of our country. I demand that a Pole shall reign over Poland. Among us is a man who, having saved the state ten times by his counsels and his victories, is regarded by all the world, as well as by ourselves, as the greatest, the first of the sons of Poland. One last consideration affects me. Poles, if we deliberate here in peace on the election of a king, if the most illustrious powers solicit our suffrages, if our strength is increased, if our liberty is in existence, if even we have a country, to whom are we indebted for it? Recall to mind the wonders of Slobodisza, Podhaïce, Kalusz, and, above all, Chocim, immortal names, and take for your king John Sobieski!"

This harangue had the desired effect, and Sobieski

furnish a rich treat for those admirers of Sobieski who are acquainted with him only from the writings of Connor, Coyer, or Palmer.

was elected King of Poland on the 19th of May, 1674.

This great man was not merely one of Fortune's minions. He had not, like many indeed, to contend with the disadvantages of an obscure birth or a contracted education. His immediate ancestry were not only illustrious, but powerful; and he had from childhood every opportunity that Europe afforded to acquire the most recent information as regards the useful arts of war and policy, and at the same time to cultivate science and elegant learning. His father and grandfather were distinguished in Polish history; the former was castellan of Cracow, the chief secular senator of Poland, and four times marshal of the diet under Sigismund III. He was a skilful and renowned general; nor were his talents confined to war; we have before had occasion to allude to one of his literary compositions, the *Commentaries of the Chocim War* (*Commentariorum Chotinensis Belli Libri Tres, Auctore Jacobo Sobieski*), which is in much better Latin than the moderns have generally written. He married the granddaughter* of the great Zolkiewski, who defeated the Russians at Moscow in the reign of Sigismund III., and took the czar prisoner. We have recorded this great man's death as it is described by his relative.

Sobieski first studied the art of war in France; where he was sent in his youth, accompanied by his elder brother Mark. "My children," said their father, at parting, "apply yourselves in France only to the useful arts; as to dancing, you will have an opportunity of accomplishing yourselves in that among the Tartars." This was during the minority of Louis XIV. The embryo hero of Poland was then enrolled among the *grand musketeers*, a company which had been established by Louis XIII. On

* Coyer calls her his daughter, but he is mistaken; nor is this the only instance. See Coyer, p. 67, London edition, 1762. Compare with Salvandy, vol. i. p. 165.

leaving France, the brothers visited England, Italy, and Turkey. When they returned to Poland, they found Casimir on the throne and involved in the troublesome war with the Cossacks and Turks. Their father was now dead, but their mother well supplied his place as a guardian to her sons. John, however, soon lost his brother in a conflict with the Tartars; and his mother, with whom he was not a favourite, retired to Italy. Sobieski had incurred the displeasure of his mother by fighting two duels, in the latter of which he was wounded and prevented from being present at an affray with the Cossacks at Batowitz, in 1652, which proved fatal to Mark. The first of these was fought with one of the Paçs, a powerful Lithuanian family, and originated in a dispute at the election of John Casimir. The Paçs were from that time his declared enemies for life, and often did their intrigues cause him to regret, in his manhood, the impetuosity of his youth. Various charges of youthful gayety and thoughtlessness during his sojourn in France were also brought against him; and John Sobieski was now considered but a young debauchee, and the degenerate descendant of a noble family. But soon did he "falsify men's hopes," and throwing off the mask of revelry, came forth in the character of the greatest warrior of his age. He was instrumental in defeating the Cossacks and Tartars, for which service Casimir made him successively standard-bearer and grand-general. He also held with the last office that of grand-marshal, a place of great importance.

Besides his merit, Sobieski availed himself of other roads to distinction and power. His marriage with Marie de la Grange, one of the maids of honour to the wife of Casimir, strengthened his influence at court. She was the widow of Zamoyski, Palatine of Landomir, and daughter of the Marquis d'Anquien, and a confidant of her mistress. "She was very

ingenious and beautiful," says Connor;* "but John was not very willing to marry her till Casimir promised he would give him considerable places and make him grand-general." And this, says the same author, was the cause of his being made king.

It has been already seen how impatient Sobieski was under the reign of Michael, and how he plotted his dethronement. That act of open defiance to his sovereign, the infringement of the treaty with the Turks, rendered him a great favourite with the soldiers; he seemed to them another Camillus, throwing his sword into the scale which was to weigh the tribute.

Before the coronation ceremonies were performed, he determined to prosecute the war with the Turks. His object in deferring the solemnity of inauguration seems to have been that he might retain the office of grand-general for a time. Sobieski appears to have fought with the stimulus of personal animosity; every Moslem whom he killed was another libation of atonement to appease the manes of his slaughtered relatives. Every enemy whom he laid low might have been the murderer of his uncle or his brother, and at least revenge was satisfied with the blood that was shed. After various skirmishes the Polish troops encountered the Turks and Tartars near Leopold in Galicia; the former mustered only 15,000, while they had to contend with above 60,000.† Although it was in the month of August there was a heavy fall of snow, which fortunately served to incommode the enemy. The superstitious Poles exclaimed, "a miracle!" the writers of the times record

* Connor was an Irish physician of some note, and was engaged in that capacity by Sobieski. He has written a "History of Poland," which is the work referred to.

† These numbers are multiplied by Connor more than fourfold; but as the Turkish troops were only an advanced guard, we adhere to the number given by Coyer. The doctor pretends too that Sobieski's troops amounted only to 5000.

it as one, and Sobieski had too much good sense to undeceive them.

Trusting that they had God on their side, they fought with the firm belief that they should conquer, and most probably every one of the 10,000 dead bodies which the Turks are said to have left on the field was in their eyes a confirmation of their faith. The enemy fled in one night as many leagues as they had marched in three days before.

The vizier in the course of his retreat invested Trembowla, a small town strongly fortified, in Podolia, which was defended by Samuel Chrasonowski, a renegade Jew. He first tried negotiation, but the brave Jewish governor returned this answer: "Thou art mistaken if thou expectest to find gold within these walls: we have nothing here but steel and soldiers; our number indeed is small, but our courage is great." The Turkish general then ordered the place to be cannonaded; but all to no purpose. The wife of the Jewish commander was as resolute as her husband, and assisted with her own hands to supply ammunition. The Polish nobles who were stationed there did not, however, emulate the example of their female general, but began to plan a surrender. They were overheard by the heroine, who ran through the thickest of the fire to inform her husband; and he, by dint of threats and persuasion, induced them to hold out.

The attack was carried on with increased vigour; the sturdy walls of Trembowla trembled, and the governor began to fear that the Lord of Hosts had abandoned him. His wife perceived his anxiety, and seizing two poniards, said to her husband, "One of these is destined for thee, if thou surrenderest this town; the other I intend for myself."

But the Jew was not fated to become a modern Pætus; for almost at this very crisis the Polish army headed by Sobieski appeared in sight, and gave the Turks more important matters to engage their atten-

tion. The Moslem forces were again routed with the loss of seven or eight thousand men, and retreated to Kamiéniec, the chief town of Podolia, where they made their stay during the winter.

Sobieski spent the interim in the ceremonies of coronation, which were of great importance in Poland, where the king was little more than a *rex designatus* till that form had taken place. The funeral of the deceased king was always deferred till his successor had been appointed to succeed him; so particular were the Poles to avoid an appearance of interregnum and anarchy in a country whose very government was a tissue of insubordination. On the present occasion, by a singular coincidence, it happened that two kings were to be committed to the grave. Casimir had lately died in France, and one dirge was sung at the obsequies of both him and Michael. This was really a practical method of teaching new monarchs, that

“ ——— within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court.”

The ceremony* is then concluded with a singular form. Every new king is obliged to appear in the Stanislas-Kirche, where Boleslas murdered the prelate. But, as if *he* were the perpetrator of the deed, John went to the spot on foot, and declared, as was the custom, that “the crime was atrocious, that he was innocent of it, detested it, and asked pardon for it, by imploring the protection of the holy martyr upon himself and his kingdom.”†

When all these pageants were concluded, John was again obliged to take the field in September, 1676, as usual with an inferior force. He had 38,000

* The coronation medals bore the device of a naked sword passing through several crowns of laurel, and at the point a regal crown with this inscription, “*Per has ad istam.*”

† Zaluski.

against 200,000 Turks and Tartars; yet he made a stand at Zurawno, a little town in Pokucia on the west of the Dniester, and fortified his camp with intrenchments. The Turkish army were encamped on the other side of the river, and had besides cut off the communication behind the Poles. The fate of Sobieski and Poland seemed now to hang by a hair. The king even condescended to send messengers to the Tartar prince with proposals of peace, but without any concessions. "What brought us here," said the envoy to the cham, "is the love of peace, which you yourselves stand in need of. We bring neither the petitions nor the looks of suppliants, but a courage that is proof against every thing; and our swords shall procure us peace if our negotiations cannot." As he spoke these words he drew his sword half out of its sheath, which greatly provoked the cham, though no further notice was taken of the impertinence; but the Polish embassy was dismissed.

The Turks now made an attempt to pass the river, but were repulsed with great loss; and Ibrahim, the vizier, seeing the danger of bearding the lion in his den, determined to annoy him at a distance. He opened trenches as if he was besieging a town, and the artillery was brought to bear on the Polish camp. A ball went through the king's tent; but he refused to take any precaution for his own safety, feeling that the crisis demanded personal hazard, to let the soldiers see that they bore no more than their general.

Ibrahim still remembered the terrible havoc Sobieski had made among the gigantic Turkish forces, and feared even what he considered the dying strength of the formidable Pole; he therefore sent deputies with proposals of peace. They demanded the performance of the treaty made by Michael, and swore "by their beards and mustachios, to ensure the safety of the Polish army, offering to continue hostages till it had passed the Dniester, after signing a more solid peace than the former." To these

conditions John refused to submit, and determined rather to try the vast odds of so unequal a battle.

There were only provisions for four days in the Polish camp, and the king gave orders for an attack on the following morning. This was an awful night for Sobieski; it was one of those periods when even the gigantic mind labours under the burden of its own mighty efforts to achieve what seems impossible to ordinary men. He confessed that he never felt any solicitude and anxiety equal to this; but when he thought of the disgraceful treaty of Michael, he resolved to conquer or to die.

Day, however, dawned with a brighter prospect on the Poles. Sedition had sprung up in the Moslem camp; the janizaries were dissatisfied, and the Tartars, tired of this unprofitable kind of war, threatened to desert. Besides, news arrived that the Russians were advancing to the aid of the Poles; and the French and English ambassadors were already arrived at Leopold, and demanded passports to go to the king's camp. These circumstances obliged Ibrahim to lower his authoritative tone, and he consented to make peace on acceptable terms. Two-thirds of the Ukraine were given up to Poland; the other third was to remain in the hands of the Cossacks, under protection of the sultan. Podolia also was restored except Kamiéniec, which was still retained.

John returned to Poland with the credit of having finished the campaign honourably. He then gave the French ambassador an audience, and was invested with the order of the "Holy Ghost," by order of Louis XIV. This rather nettled the Poles; "It was stooping to the pride of France," said they, "to wear its livery."

John had now an interval of five years' peace, though he could not be said to enjoy any of its sweets, for he was continually harassed by the petty warfare of political intrigues carried on by his wife and the Jesuits. Although the *pacta conventa*

expressly forbade all female influence in the polity of the kingdom, Mary contrived to manage Sobieski and his diet according to her own will. "Her sweet temper," says Connor, "refined sense, and majestic air gained her such affection with the Poles, such influence over the king, and such a sustained interest in the diet, that she managed all with a great deal of prudence." She was present at all the debates, not in public, but in a private situation, where she could hear without being seen. She had one day a matter of personal interest, the increase of her allowance, before the diet, but the king endeavoured to defer it till the assembly were in a better humour. The queen, however, would not be put off, and sent her chancellor to the king with a message to that purpose. The king was incensed, and though he was obliged to obey, felt probably the more ready to do so as he was certain the demand would be rejected. In this, however, he was mistaken, and was shown the extent of his wife's influence, for she had covertly gained over the deputies, and not the slightest opposition was made to the proposal.

Sobieski managed the Jesuits better. It was rumoured that a ghost had appeared in the house of a Polish gentleman in Volhynia, and had also made very serious remarks on the king and his government. Pasquinades of all kinds were laid to the charge of the scurrilous spirit; and a Jesuit, Gnievosz, chaplain to the grand-general, bore witness to the reality of the apparition. The king, who was not to be frightened by shadows, and was not to be made a dupe of the designing or the credulous, sent an intelligent officer to have a colloquy with the ghost, and demand his credentials from the king on the other side of the grave. The spirit was soon laid, and the king readily understood who were the plotters of the trick; nor did he forget to retaliate. Seeing his Jesuitical confessor at court, he said to him, after mentioning the ghost story, "Well, what

does your rascal, Gniewosz, say to that?" The Jesuit imagined this but a prelude to further disgrace, and was so affected that he actually died in consequence before the expiration of eight days.

The same order took the liberty of encroaching on some of the queen's lands by means of interpolated or confused title-deeds; but the king soon stopped this aggression also, resolutely but mildly. In writing to the general of the Jesuits, he said, "I shall not summon your brethren at Jaroslaw to appear before the diet, where I should have on my side both justice and the respect that is due to me. I am afraid of increasing by this means the hatred which is already borne you. I only advise you to be upon your guard against those who have the management of your houses, &c." This quickly produced a restitution of the purloined property, and the Jesuits were in future more on their guard in affronting Sobieski. Had this king acted with the same good sense and determination in other matters of a similar kind, he would have made his reign much more happy and glorious.

John had long wished to renew the war with the Turks; and in addition to his inveterate and family hatred to that nation, the reproaches of the Paçs and their party, continually reminding him that Kamiéniec was in their hands, spurred him on, and an opportunity now offered to do so. Leopold, Emperor of Germany and King of Hungary, had driven his Hungarian subjects to revolt by infringements on their national liberties. The noted Tekeli, one of the principal nobles of that oppressed country, was their leader; and they then entered into an alliance with the Turks. Mahomet sent notice to Leopold, that the Hungarians were now the allies and subjects of the Porte, and that all the Austrian troops must be withdrawn from Hungary, unless he chose to be considered the infringer of the peace. Leopold earnestly begged the aid of the Poles, but Sobieski seemed at

first disinclined to assist the proud and tyrannical emperor. But he next turned to a more favourable listener in the queen. Several reasons made the proposal agreeable to her; she was piqued with Louis XIV. for his neglect of her family, and was glad to thwart him in his attempts to subject Leopold to Turkish invasion; besides, the emperor promised to marry the archduchess to her son, and to ensure the succession to the Polish crown in her family. Sobieski could not withstand Mary's artifices; and, perhaps, he was in fact glad of the opportunity to break a lance with the Turks. He agreed to have 48,000 men in readiness to assist Leopold whenever they might be required; but a trifle almost deprived the emperor of this invaluable ally. Leopold agreed to give up his pretensions to the salt mines of Wieliczka, which had been pledged to the emperor by Casimir as a security for 5,000,000 florins, and to advance 1,200,000 florins for the expenses of the expedition; but John refused to sign the treaty, unless the emperor styled him His Majesty, which for a long time he obstinately refused. This demand was, without doubt, made at the instigation of Mary, who was piqued because Louis would not give her husband that title. Leopold was at last obliged, though reluctantly, to yield assent, and John Sobieski became his ally.

Louis, in the mean time, had not been idle in attempting to counteract these designs. His ambassador succeeded in attaching a strong party to his interest; but the vigilance of Sobieski frustrated the plan, and the French ambassador, nettled at his defeat, returned to amuse and deceive Louis with telling him that the Polish king was grown too fat and gouty to be able to make a single campaign. In a few weeks, however, all Europe was told a very different story.

The sultan's forces were ready in April, 1683, but as the truce was not expired, he did not take

advantage of the unprepared state of Leopold's army. He thus sacrificed interest to truth and good faith; but he was a Barbarian, and had not been schooled in European sophistry. His opponents would have been, and in fact had been, less scrupulous. Sobieski had broken the treaty with the Porte in Michael's reign, and Leopold had trampled on all engagements to which he had pledged himself with the Hungarians. If the God of the Christians did not make his sunshine on the evil as well as the good, the Turks would have been right in expecting that He "would soon deliver them up to the faithful Mussulmans as a just punishment upon the Christians for their wanton violation of treaties."

In the beginning of May, 1683, the Moslem army set out on its march. The troops amounted nearly to 300,000 men, but above two-thirds of them were Hungarians and Tartars. They were well provided with ammunition, and had more than three hundred immense pieces of artillery. Their general was Kara Mustapha, the grand vizier, who was invested with plenary power by the sultan.

The route through Hungary was open to the Turks, who came as the allies and defenders of that country, so that no hopes remained for the Austrians but in their own resistance. The Duke of Lorraine, Leopold's brother-in-law, who had been one of Sobieski's competitors for the Polish crown, commanded the imperial troops, who barely mustered 37,000 men.

The vizier marched his army from Belgrade along the western side of the Danube, and proceeded almost without a blow to Vienna. The emperor became now as timid and crouching in his adversity as he had been proud and overbearing in his prosperity. The haughty Leopold was to be seen running away before the Tartars from town to town, an edifying picture of humiliated tyranny. To add to his troubles, the empress, who accompanied him, was

then pregnant, and even in this state she was obliged, one night during their retreat, to sleep in a wood on a bundle of straw. This was a time for the bleak night-winds to whisper to Leopold that monition, "Take physic, pomp!" Behind him he could see the farms and cottages of his poor subjects in flames, of which his tyrannical pride was the incendiary, as conscience, no doubt, too plainly told him. But though he was the cause of all these troubles he did not hazard a hair of his head to remove them, but left his capital to defend itself against the immense host of Turks pouring down upon it.

Vienna is protected on the north by the Danube, and was at that time pretty strongly fortified on the other sides. On the south there is a plain of nearly three leagues in extent; and it was here that the vizier pitched his camp, which almost covered that surface.* The Duke of Lorraine threw a part of his infantry into the city, and stationed the rest in Leopoldstat, an island of the Danube to the north of Vienna. It was on the 8th of July that the Turkish artillery began to play on the walls, and the Austrians to tremble for the result.

Count Staremhourg commanded the garrison, which consisted of little more than 11,000 men, and in addition to them he armed the university and citizens.† He received no further aid from the Duke of Lorraine, who now retired from the island of Leopoldstat, and was engaged in continual skirmishes with the Tartars. The siege went on with vigour, and by the 22d of July the Turks had made very near approaches to the walls.

At this juncture the garrison received news from

* The Turkish army encamped before Vienna amounted to 191,800 men, as appeared from a list found in the vizier's tent.—*Connor*.

The author of a *Journal of the Siege of Vienna* states, that the muster-roll contained only 168,000, and that even this was purposely overrated.—*Journal of the Siege of Vienna. Harleian MSS.*

† The above manuscript rates them at 16,000, besides 2,382 armed citizens

the Duke of Lorraine. He promised them speedy succour, though this was most probably done merely to inspirit them. The bearer of the message had swum across the four arms of the Danube, and had to return with his answer the same way. The bold messenger was not so fortunate this time, being taken by the enemy. The letter with which he was intrusted was sent back into the city, with another on the point of an arrow. The purport of the latter epistle was, "that all letters were now useless, for that God would soon deliver up Vienna to the faithful Mussulmans as a just punishment upon the Christians for their wanton violation of treaties." They reproached the emperor for breaking a treaty which followed the battle of St. Gothard; with infringing on the privileges of the Hungarians, and violating two treaties made with Tekeli. They reproached the Poles for taking up arms without being attacked, and in defiance of the oaths they had sworn at Buczacz and at Zurawno.

The siege was continued with increased vigour, and to add to the alarm of the citizens, reports were raised that traitors were making a subterraneous entry for the enemy, and that incendiaries increased the fires caused by the Turkish red-hot balls.

The Duke of Lorraine sent repeated messengers to Sobieski to beg him to bring speedy succour; but the Polish troops could not be assembled till towards the end of August, and even then they amounted only to 24,000 men.* Before Sobieski began his march he received a letter from the emperor, which shows how adversity can lower the pride of little minds. "We are convinced," said Leopold, "that by reason of the vast distance of your army it is absolutely impossible for it to come time enough to contribute to the preservation of a place which is in

* "The king, with his son Prince James, Prince Lubomirski, and most of the Polish grandees, came with an army only, as they assured me, of 24,000 men to relieve it (Vienna)."—*Connor*. Let. 4.

the most imminent danger. It is not, therefore, your troops, *sire*, that we expect, but *your majesty's* own presence; being fully persuaded that if your royal presence will vouchsafe to appear at the head of our forces, though less numerous than those of the enemy, your name alone, which is so justly dreaded by them, will make their defeat certain.”*

The queen accompanied him to the frontiers, and the following letter, which he wrote to her on the day after their parting, will make us more intimately acquainted with the champion of Vienna:—

“Only joy of my soul, charming and beloved
Mariette!

“I have passed a very bad night here. One of my arms is numbed; I have also suffered great pain in the spine of my back. I shall have an attack of rheumatism after this.

“Dupont has given me still more pain; he returned from you at nine in the evening, and has told me that the violent agitation you feel may probably affect your health. I beg you, my dear soul, to compose yourself and submit to the will of God. He will deign to grant me his guardian angels, and allow me to return to my friends safe and sound.”†

Thus Sobieski, fifty-four years old, and in such a state of health, so weak and debilitated as to be obliged to be almost lifted on his horse, was the only man whom the empire could look to for aid.

As Sobieski was on his march with his little army, he saw, one day, an eagle flying by them from the right, and availing himself of the superstition of the Poles, he took the opportunity of encouraging them by interpreting it as a good omen. On another

* This letter was to be seen in Coyer's time in the archives of Poland.
—Coyer.

† Histoire de Pologne avant et sous le Roi Jean Sobieski, par N. A. De Salvandy, tom. iii. p. 53. There is also a collection of Sobieski's letters, translated by Count Plater, and published by the above author.

occasion he perceived some singular atmospheric phenomena, which he turned to the same favourable account.

The Polish forces marched along the banks of the Danube without any resistance, and were joined there by the Duke of Lorraine and some other German forces hastening to the rescue of Vienna. The German generals expressed some anxiety as to the result of the conflict, but Sobieski cut them short by saying, "Consider the general you have to deal with, and not the multitude he commands. Which of you, at the head of 200,000 men, would have suffered this bridge to be built within five leagues of his camp? The man has no capacity." He alluded to the bridge at Tuln, which the Duke of Lorraine had erected for the passage of the troops.

As the Polish army crossed the bridge they were particularly admired for the fineness of their horses, their uniform and general appearance; but one battalion seemed a sad exception, being very badly accoutred. One of the generals expressed his opinion to the king that it was a disgrace to the rest; but Sobieski thought otherwise. "Look at it well," said he, as it was passing the bridge, "it is an invincible body, that has sworn never to wear any clothes but what it takes from the enemy. In the last war they were all clad in the Turkish manner."

The Turks offered not the least opposition to the Poles as they crossed the bridge, and all the imperial troops were safely assembled on the western side of the Danube by the 7th of September, and amounted to about 70,000 men.

They could hear from Tuln the roar of the Turkish cannon. Vienna was, in fact, reduced almost to its last gasp. Most of the garrison were either killed or wounded, and disease was making even greater ravages than the enemy's balls. "The grave continued open without ever closing its mouth."* As

* Coyer.

early as the 22d of August the officers had estimated that they could not withstand a general attack three days. If the vizier had pursued his advantage, Vienna must have fallen into his hands. But it was his object to avoid taking it by storm, in which case the plunder would be carried off by the soldiers, whereas, if he could oblige it to surrender, he might appropriate the spoil to his own use. So careless was he, too, in his confidence, that he had not yet ascertained that the Poles were arrived, till they were in his immediate vicinity; and when the news was afterward brought to him that the King of Poland was advancing, "The King of Poland!" said he, laughing, "I know, indeed, that he has sent Lubomirski with a few squadrons."

The governor, Starembourg, who had assured the Duke of Lorraine that "he would not surrender the place but with the last drop of his blood," began himself to despair of being longer able to hold out. A letter which he wrote at this period contained only these words: "No more time to lose, my lord, no more time to lose."

The imperial army set out on the 9th of September for Vienna, but they had a march of fourteen miles to make across a ridge of mountains over which the Germans could not drag their cannon, and were therefore obliged to leave them behind. The Poles were more persevering, for they succeeded in getting over twenty-eight pieces, which were all they had to oppose to the 300 of the enemy.

On the 11th of September they reached Mount Calenberg, the last which separated them from the Turks. "From this hill," says Sobieski's biographer, "the Christians were presented with one of the finest and most dreadful prospects of the greatness of human power; an immense plain and all the islands of the Danube covered with pavilions, whose magnificence seemed rather calculated for an encampment of pleasure than the hardships of war; an innume-

nable multitude of horses, camels, and buffaloes; 200,000 men all in motion; swarms of Tartars dispersed along the foot of the mountain in their usual confusion; the fire of the besiegers incessant and terrible, and that of the besieged such as they could contrive to make; in fine, a great city, distinguishable only by the tops of the steeples and the fire and smoke that covered it.”* But Sobieski was not imposed on by this formidable sight. “This man,” said he, “is badly encamped: he knows nothing of war; we shall certainly beat him.” The eagle eye of the experienced warrior was not mistaken.

On the eve of the battle, he wrote to the queen in these words; “We can easily see that the general of an army who has neither thought of intrenching himself nor concentrating his forces, but lies encamped there as if we were a hundred miles from him, is predestined to be beaten.”

To add to the weakness of the Turkish army, great dissatisfaction had sprung up among the troops; the length of the siege, disease, and, above all, a superstitious presentiment of bad fortune, arising partly from the denunciations which the mufti had pronounced against the sins of the vizier, and partly from a conviction that they were transgressing the law by being the aggressors, was general among the forces. The flower of the Moslem army too, the janizaries, began to murmur against their general’s apparent cowardice: “Come on, infidels,” they exclaimed, “the sight of a hat will put us to flight!” Such was the ominous state of the troops who were to withstand John Sobieski.

The vizier called a council of war on this day, which showed him the disaffection of his officers, as well as the soldiers. Most of them advised a retreat; they had engaged in the expedition reluctantly, and in opposition to their own counsel. Kara Mustapha,

* Coyer.

however, was indignant at the thought of flight: he declared his intention of renewing the assault of the city, at the same time while the body of his army kept the allied army in check.

Sunday, the 12th of September, 1683, was the important day, "big with the fate" of Leopold, that was to decide whether the Turkish crescent was to wave on the turrets of Vienna. The cannonade on the city began at the break of day, for which purpose the vizier on his part had withdrawn from his army the janizaries, all his infantry, and nearly all his artillery. The light cavalry, the Spahis, the Tartars, and other irregular troops, were the forces destined to encounter the enemy; so egregiously did Kara Mustapha miscalculate the strength of his opponents. They were commanded by Ibrahim Pacha, who was regarded by the Turks as one of the greatest generals of the age; but, unfortunately for them, he was one of those who disapproved the war, and particularly the present plan of it. At eight in the morning there was some warm skirmishing; at eleven the Christian army was drawn up in array in the plain; and Kara Mustapha, beginning to apprehend that the allies were more formidable than he anticipated, had changed his design, and came to command his troops in person. He was stationed in the centre, and Sobieski occupied the same situation in his army.

It was nearly five in the evening, and the engagement had only been partial; for Sobieski's infantry had not come up, and the vizier was to be seen under a superb crimson tent, quietly sipping coffee, while the King of Poland was before him. At length the infantry arrived, and Sobieski ordered them to seize an eminence which commanded the vizier's position. The promptitude and gallantry with which this manœuvre was executed decided the fate of the day. Kara Mustapha, taken by surprise at this unexpected attack, ordered all his infantry to his right wing, and

the movement put all the line in confusion. The king cried out that they were lost men; he ordered the Duke of Lorraine to attack the centre, which was now exposed and weakened, while he himself made his way through the confused Turks straight for the vizier's tent. He was instantly recognised by the streamers which adorned the lances of his guard, "By Allah!" exclaimed the cham of the Tartars, "the king is with them!" An eclipse of the moon added to the consternation of the superstitious Moslems. At this moment the Polish cavalry made a grand charge, and at the same time the Duke of Lorraine with his troops added to the confusion; and the rout of the Turks became general. The vizier in vain tried to rally them. "And you," said he to the cham of the Tartars, who passed him among the fugitives, "cannot you help me?" "I know the King of Poland!" was the answer. "I told you that if we had to deal with him, all we could do would be to run away. Look at the sky; see if God is not against us." The immense Turkish army was wholly broken up, and Vienna was saved.

So sudden and general was the panic among the Turks, that by six o'clock Sobieski had taken possession of their camp. One of the vizier's stirrups, finely enamelled, was brought to him. "Take this stirrup," said he, "to the queen, and tell her, that the person to whom it belonged is defeated." Having strictly forbidden his soldiers from plundering, they rested under the Turkish tents.

Such were the events of the famous deliverance of Vienna as they were seen by the looker-on; and the outline of the narrative is filled up by one who was the best informed, and not the least impartial, no less than the great hero himself. "The victory has been so sudden and extraordinary," he writes to the queen, "that the city, as well as the camp, was in continual alarm, expecting to see the enemy return

every moment.*—Night put an end to the pursuit, and besides, the Turks defended themselves with fury (*acharnement*) in their flight.—All the troops have done their duty well; they attribute the victory to God and us. At the moment when the enemy began to give ground (and the greatest shock was where I was stationed, opposite the vizier), all the cavalry of the rest of the army advanced towards me on the right wing, the centre and the left wing having as yet but little to do.—'The emperor is about a mile and a half distant. He is coming down the Danube in a *chaloupe*; but I perceive he has no great wish to see me, perhaps on account of the etiquette. I am very glad to avoid all these ceremonies; we have been treated with nothing else up to this time. Our darling (*fanfan*) is brave in the highest degree.'†

Among the spoil a large standard fell into the hands of the victors; and it was mistaken for that of Mahomet. It was sent as such to the pope, and suspended in the church of Loretto, "Where," says Connor, "I have seen it." The real standard is enclosed in an ark of gold, with the Koran and the prophet's robe, and is carried by a camel before the sultan or vizier. When it is displayed in battle, an officer is appointed to carry it off on the slightest

* The passage which follows here offers a singular illustration of Sobieski's mind, which, in the midst of the exultation of a glorious victory, could turn its attention to inquiries into natural phenomena. "I have witnessed this night," he says, "a spectacle which I have long wished for. Our wagon-train set fire to the powder in several places; the explosion was like that of the last judgment; notwithstanding, nobody was wounded. *I had an opportunity of seeing on this occasion in what way the clouds are formed in the atmosphere*; but it is a mischance: it is certainly a loss of more than half a million (florins)." Of Sobieski's philosophy we shall take occasion to say more hereafter. We cannot help remarking, too, another characteristic trait in this epistle: Sobieski seems more delighted at the large booty he has made than the importance or glory of the victory. Almost the very first word he addresses to his wife is about the riches of the Turkish camp, and nearly the whole of the long letter is more like an appraiser's valuation, than a hero's description of a momentous battle.

† Letter ix. of Salvandy's collection.

reverse that may threaten the Turkish army. This was the case in the present instance, but many writers still maintain that it was the real standard that was taken.

The loss on the side of the victors was very trifling, notwithstanding the importance of the victory; nor does it appear from any of the statements to have been very great on that of the Turks. Immense treasures were found in the enemy's camp; so much so, that Sobieski had for his share some millions of ducats.

On the following day John made his entrance into Vienna. The breach made by the Turks, and through which they expected to march to the destruction of the city, was the road which admitted its deliverer. The citizens received him with undisguised expressions of gratitude; and even the stern warrior Sobieski shed a tear or two of joy at receiving the thanks and acclamations of the victims whom he had rescued from destruction. "Never," said he, "did the crown yield me pleasure like this!" The people could not help comparing him with their own disgraceful sovereign, and exclaiming, "Ah! why is not this our master?" With difficulty could the stern looks of the emperor's officers check these natural expressions of feeling. But Sobieski did not arrogate to himself only the glory of the victory; he went to the cathedral to return thanks, and began to sing the *Te Deum* himself. A sermon was afterward delivered, and the preacher, in the taste of that age of conceits and far-fetched puerilities, chose the following text for the occasion:—"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."* Sobieski found upon the towers of this church the Turkish crescent which had been erected there by the great Solymán in 1529, and was to be left as a monument of his unfinished expedition according to

* Salvandy calls this "*Peloquente inspiration*."

the conditions upon which he agreed to raise the siege. He ordered this memento of Austrian disgrace to be torn down and trampled under foot.*

But the low-minded Leopold, who had descended to such adulation and entreaty when danger threatened, could not bear to witness the triumph of his deliverer. Every report of the cannon, which announced a fresh tribute of applause to Sobieski, fell like a reproach on his ears. He lingered on his journey on the banks of the Danube, unwilling to add by his presence to the honour of his rival and his own shame. "It was the weakness of the counsels that you had a share in," said he, turning spitefully to one of his ministers, "that occasions me this disgrace."

Leopold's weak mind sunk under the burden of such a favour; and envy and spleen, together with a sense of his own littleness, would not allow him to magnify his benefactor and the object of his jealousy with expressions of gratitude. "A man who reminds us of a favour cancels it," says a pithy aphorist;† and to this we might add, that he who receives a kindness ungraciously doubles the obligation. But not so thought the emperor. In this moment, when the heart should have been eager to pour forth its gratitude, he was deferring the evil day by disgraceful quibbles about the ceremony with which he was to receive Sobieski. He inquired whether an elective king ever had an interview with an emperor, and how he was received. "Receive him," said the Duke of Lorraine, who had been one of Sobieski's unsuccessful competitors for the Polish crown; "receive

* This story is otherwise paraphrased by the author of the manuscript "Journal of the Siege of Vienna" before quoted; but we are rather skeptical about this work, as well as the published "Journal," and not the less about the latter, because the distinguished author of the "Annales de l'Empire," Voltaire, gives credit to some of its exaggerated statements.

† Rochefoucault.

him with open arms, since he has preserved the empire." The emperor, however, refused to give his benefactor the right hand, and John was too good-natured and unceremonious to urge this point of unmeaning and trumpery etiquette. At length it was agreed that the interview should take place on horseback in the open plain, and that they should remain facing each other, which would not allow much punctilio in the mode of salutation.

At the appointed hour, John Sobieski rode up to the emperor in the same armour which he had worn in the defence of Vienna, and accosted him with the ease of conscious but unassuming rank. The emperor, on the contrary, was very distant and ceremonious, and began to recount in a very ungracious manner the services the Germans had rendered the Poles at different periods. At length he wrung from his lips the word *gratitude* for the deliverance of Vienna; at which Sobieski merely remarked, "Brother, I am glad I have done you that small service." The young Polish prince James came up at this moment, and his father presented him to Leopold, with these words, "This is a prince whom I am educating for the service of Christendom." The emperor merely nodded, although this was the young man whom he had promised to make his son-in-law. One of the Polish palatines, stepping forward to kiss the haughty emperor's boot, was checked by Sobieski, exclaiming, "Palatine, no meanness." The interview was then at an end.

Sobieski was no doubt much disgusted with this treatment, and felt inclined to return to Poland, but his animosity to the Turks and the hope of uniting his son to the house of Austria, made him "digest the venom of his spleen." He also kept in mind the adage of an old Polish poet, which he quotes in one of his letters to the queen: "He who cannot conceal his vexation makes himself a laughingstock

for his enemies:" and he determined to prosecute the war.*

Sobieski thus describes this singular meeting:—

"I had my interview with the emperor the day before yesterday, that is, on the 15th. He arrived at Vienna some hours after my departure.†—We saluted each other politely enough; I paid my compliments to him in Latin, and in few words. He answered me in the same language in picked terms.—I presented my son to him, who approached and saluted him. The emperor only put his hand to his hat.—He treated the senators and hetmans, and even his relation the Prince Palatine of Belz, in the same way. To avoid the scandal and comments of the public, I again addressed a few words to the emperor, after which I turned my horse; we saluted each other, and I rode back to my camp. The Palatine of Russia showed our army to the emperor as he had desired him; but our people are very much piqued, and complain highly that the emperor did not deign to thank them, except by touching his hat, for so many pains and privations. After this separation, every thing is suddenly changed; it is as if they did not know us any longer.—They give us no more forage or provision."

Nor was Sobieski the only one who experienced such treatment: "Ingratitude," says Salvandy, "was the soul of the imperial court. Generals, vassals, and allies saw their services condemned to the same

* Connor gives a different account of the interview. "Next day after his entry," says he, "the emperor came to meet him, and made him his acknowledgments with the most endearing expressions imaginable, while King John received his compliments with a modesty equal to his courage."—Vol. i. let. iv. This is, however, one of the unmeaning passages which are so frequent in the doctor's meager narrative, and he places the interview on the wrong day; he afterward says that the Poles "were highly disgusted at the ill treatment they received from the Germans." The "Journal of the Siege" gives nearly the same account, as might be expected.

† Sobieski here describes, among other things, all the minutiae of the emperor's dress.

neglect." All but Sobieski began to desert the cause.

But Fortune was now going to check for a moment his honourable and triumphant career. A remnant of the Turkish troops was stationed at the bridge of Barcan, on the Danube, and John attempted to dislodge them without the assistance of the imperial troops; in fact, they were not very speedy in following him. But the Moslems rushed on unexpectedly, and the Poles suddenly became disordered and fled. Sobieski was exposed to great danger, and while carried away by his unmanageable horse, bruised and tired in the scuffle, he saw through the cloud of dust a young man who was caught by his cloak by a Turkish soldier: this was no other than his son. For a moment he was in awful suspense, expecting that he should be the eyewitness of his child's death; but the young prince fortunately escaped with only the loss of his cloak.

The imperial troops came up and saved the Poles from further slaughter, and the great John Sobieski, the deliverer of Vienna, was now to be seen lying, overcome with fatigue and vexation, on a bundle of hay. His son was brought to him, and that served in some degree to lighten his sorrow. He however addressed the German generals, who had come so opportunely to his rescue, with his characteristic affability and candour. "I confess I wanted," said he, "to conquer without you, for the honour of my own nation. I have suffered severely for it, being soundly beaten; but I will take my revenge with you and for you. To effect this must be the chief employment of our thoughts." He also wrote to the queen that "he was advancing towards the enemy, and that she must expect they would be defeated, or bid him farewell for ever."

John soon came up with the Turks again, and wiped off his late disgrace; after which, the winter being far advanced, he proceeded over the Carpathian

mountains, and took up his quarters at Cracow on the 24th of December, 1683.

He was disgusted with the continual petty attacks of jealousy from all quarters;—of kings, generals, and politicians. How strikingly are his bitter feelings poured out in the following words, which were written to the queen a short time before he began his march to Cracow. "How knowingly these statesmen speak in their chimney-corners; and when they happen to find themselves mistaken in their calculations, what does it signify to them? They will recant, and that is all! Oh! I renounce altogether for the future the whole of these alliances and their commands, even if they were of all Europe!" Louis XIV., who, with all his weakness and all his tyranny, was considered as a sort of deity in the eyes of the humble disciples of legitimacy, was also a "jealous god," and devoutly did all his servants keep his commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me!" Most studiously did the French official gazettes avoid the name of Sobieski; but glory like his cannot be "hidden under a bushel." While they attempted to decrease the honour of the victory, by ascribing it to a panic of the Turks, they own that this terror arose from their hearing the king was there in person. "Such," says Salvandy, "was the petty war of the French politicians against John Sobieski. This is a strange way of depressing his glory. Flattery, with all its invention, would in vain strive to equal this compliment."

How different was the spirit of the letter written to Sobieski by Christina, the notorious ex-queen of Sweden, then resident at Rome! "I am tormented with the passion of envy, a trouble which is the less tolerable, as it is new to me. I never envied any of my contemporaries till to-day. Your majesty alone is an object of envy to me, and teaches me that I am subject to that feeling of which I thought myself entirely incapable."

Pope Innocent II., who was too insignificant to excite the envy either of Louis or Leopold, was made the hero of the grand day of Vienna. To his prayers and money the two monarchs attributed the glorious victory. Leopold, as if to inflict on himself the bitterest irony, caused medals to be struck of himself, with arms in his hand, saving the empire. He also ordered a statue to be erected to the pope, the liberator of Christianity. The silly old man absolutely ordered a grand triumphal procession, in which banners were exhibited, bearing the portraits of himself and the emperor.

Glory was the only advantage the Poles obtained by this memorable campaign. Sobieski wrung the title of *Majesty*, as above mentioned, from Leopold, and received the unwilling compliments of most of the European princes. Poland gained the alteration of the title *inclyta respublica* to *serenissima*, and thus were Sobieski and his kingdom rewarded for saving Austria and Eastern Europe, by two empty titles. The king's thanks were really affront, insolence, and breach of promise; and Poland saved a serpent from death which afterward turned and stung her for the kindness.*

But these were not the only ill consequences of this glorious expedition, as we shall see in the course of the history. The victory was indeed one of those grand convulsions in the polity of Europe which are felt for ages. From the famous 12th of September, the Turks never gained an inch of ground. The effects it had on Poland were very different from what might be at first anticipated. "This famous deliverance of invaded Germany," says one who thought long and deeply on the subject,† "became a continual source of troubles: not only had it given

* Some striking comments on Sobieski's policy, or rather impolicy, towards the court of Vienna, may be seen in Salvandy's *Histoire de Pologne avant et sous le Roi Jean Sobieski*, tom. iii. p. 276.

† Rulhière, tom. i. p. 63.

rise to a war which the republic was not in a state to carry on, but it also produced an alliance which eventually became more fatal than the war itself." The truth of this will be soon seen.

The king attempted in the following year, 1684, to make a more profitable campaign. Kamiéniec-Podolski had long been a bone of contention to the Poles and Turks, and was so still. The latter people had been its masters some years, as there has been occasion to mention before in the course of this history. It stands in the south of Podolia, on the craggy banks which form, as it were, the joints of the Dniester and one of its tributary streams. It was from its strength and situation a place of great importance to the Poles; but Sobieski contented himself with erecting a small fort at three miles' distance from it, and returned to enjoy the sweets of peace.

He now rather incurred the displeasure of his subjects by taking a Jesuit of the name of Vota into his familiarity; and though it cannot be supposed from John's treatment of that order it was from any partiality to the intriguing society, he allowed him in conjunction with the queen to attain great influence over him. Vota was a man of the world, well informed, and a much more agreeable companion than Sobieski was accustomed to meet at his court in that age of limited information. This preference gave great umbrage to the Poles, and was probably the cause of much opposition which John now met with. They expressed their displeasure in every possible way, and, among others, by a caricature of a long procession drawn up by a Jesuit beating time with the king and two other Jesuits, who were holding a music-book, to which he seemed to pay great attention. This silly burlesque nettled Sobieski extremely, —but an opposition of a more substantial nature was now preparing for him.

This great king imagined that his privileges ought to be somewhat extended by reason of his talents,

and occasionally took the liberty of overstepping the laws ; but this could not be allowed by a people so devoted even to the shadow of liberty, and it gave rise to frequent contention. In one instance the king convened the diet at Warsaw in February, 1685, although the law appointed it to meet that year at Grodno in Lithuania. The Lithuanians, however, paid no regard to his summons, and held a separate diet in their own province, while the Poles assembled at Warsaw. Sobieski was obliged to temporize, and adopted an expedient, with the consent of the non-contents to hold the diet in Poland as a subordinate dietine.

But he was again called to order in this very assembly. He had illegally disposed of the office of grand-chancellor of Lithuania without announcing it to the diet, and the Lithuanians were much nettled at this stretch of prerogative. Paç, a senator, and who had expected to succeed to the vacant post, was so vehement in his complaints, that Sobieski, forgetting every thing in his rage, laid his hand on his sword, and half-drawing it, exclaimed, "Do not oblige me to make you feel the weight of my arm." Paç was not to be daunted by this gesture or ebullition of rage, and imitating the threatening action, retorted, "Remember, that when we were equals you knew by experience how capable I am of dealing with you in that way." This was in allusion to a duel which they had fought in their youth. It must have been a humiliating admonition to John Sobieski. Nor was this the only fracas of the kind that occurred this session, for the queen, who was perpetually intriguing in this way, made her husband the constant butt of his nobles.

John was no doubt glad of an opportunity to escape from this scene of vexatious wrangling. Peace was to him no peace ; in the camp he had thousands at command, whereas in his own palace he could scarcely give his orders to a menial without asking

leave from the diet ; on the field of battle he was an absolute lord and the admiration of all, but in his council the most illiterate and vulgar of the "plebeian nobility" was his superior, could ridicule his policy, and cross all his designs. He therefore renewed the war against the Turks for the recovery of Kamiéniec. But the first campaign passed, and the crescent still waved on the walls of the town.

Mahomet now offered, on condition that Sobieski would secede from the league, to restore Kamiéniec and defray the expenses of the war. As the recovery of this place was the only ostensible cause of the war, had justice and policy guided the councils of the Polish king, he would have accepted the offer ; but the artifices of his wife and the Jesuit Vota, backed by the hopes that Leopold held out of making Walachia and Moldavia hereditary sovereignties in the Sobieski family, overbalanced the king's solicitude for the interest of his people, and he rejected the proffered restitution. This unfortunate and interested determination was, probably, one of the chief causes that led the way to the destruction of Poland, as it ultimately obliged John to enter into an alliance with Russia.

The war went on, and the several conflicts of this campaign were a series of studies which taught Prince Eugene, then abbot of Savoy, the art of war. They were, however, of no advantage to Poland. The only interesting occurrence was the king's halt at the burying-place and fatal battle-field of his great ancestor Zolkiewski. What must have been his feelings when he gazed on the pyramid that covered his bones, and read one of the inscriptions, "Learn of me, how sweet and how honourable it is to die for one's country !"

After this excursion, or rather military tour, Sobieski retired to Leopol, the capital of Gallicia, where the Russian envoys were awaiting him. In this year, 1686, on the 6th of May, he concluded a treaty with

the czar, by which he confirmed the alienation from Poland of Smolensko, Czerniéchow, Kiow, and Severia.* The king had not the permission of the diet to do so, although it was required by law; but he was paid down one million of money, and promised a further remittance,—an irresistible offer to Sobieski. The ambassadors were in high credit with the queen, and she most probably exerted her influence also on the occasion. This disgraceful treaty, which will ever be a damning blot on Sobieski's character, yielded to the Russians the finest part of the Ukraine and the beautiful cities watered by the Dnieper.†

When the diet assembled in the year 1688, great complaints were made of the intrigues of the king and his wife to get their son James nominated successor to the crown; but the queen had provided against this and other demurs which were to be expected, by engaging Dombrowski, one of her partisans, to dissolve the meeting by his *veto*. This was done without the king's knowledge; and he convened a senatorial assembly, or the upper house, to debate on the emergencies of state. But the discussion took a very different course from what he wished: the senators inveighed most bitterly against the queen's intrigues and the interested policy of the king, and called him "*an infringer of the laws, an oppressor of the people, and an enemy to his country.*" This was strong language, but too much like the truth; and Sobieski was glad to dissolve the meeting.

* These, it will be remembered, had been only provisionally ceded by John Casimir in 1667.

† This scandalous breach of privilege did not go unnoticed by the Poles, but "in vain did the nobility reject such a shameful treaty, and wish to investigate the business with severity. The diet which followed having been broken, a year was lost; and when in a subsequent year another diet wished to enter into the inquiry, death had carried off the two statesmen whose informations they were to take. The republic, disowning this treaty, never named any commissioner to regulate the ancient limits; and until latter days they have remained undetermined, a continual subject of dispute between the two people, which dates its origin from this treaty of perpetual peace."—*Rulhière*, tom. i. p. 62

Nor did his subjects without the walls of the senate-house couch their sentiments in more disguised language. A clergyman was preaching before the queen on confession, and had the boldness to use the following language: "Kings confess only small sins, and say nothing of great; it is well known there is a prince in the world who thinks it no crime to sell offices of state, and to sacrifice his country to his blind complaisance for a wife." Surely Poland must have been the head-quarters of candour.

Another diet was convened in the following year, and the deputies were as refractory as before. They reproached him with the treaty of 1686, and debated whether they should retract it. Raphael Leszczyński,* palatine of Posnania, made very severe remarks on the queen. "She is exalted," said he, "above the rest of her sex in spirit and abilities; but a mere woman in intrigue and artifice," &c. Another senator addressed the king, "Either cease to reign at all, or reign with justice." This was the Bishop of Culm, whom Sobieski ordered to apologize; but he refused, and was supported by his brother senators. John threatened to abdicate, but soon forgot to put his threat into execution.

It was on one of these occasions that the great man, enraged at the petty annoyance of factions, burst forth in this eloquent appeal: "It is true they have told me there was a remedy for the troubles of the republic;—that the king should not divorce liberty, but re-establish it. * * * Has he then violated it? Senators, this holy liberty in which I was born, and in which I grew up, rests on the faith of my oaths, and I am not a perjurer. I have devoted my life to it; from my youth, the blood of all my family has taught me to found my glory on this devotion. Let him who doubts it go visit the tombs of my ancestors; let him follow the path to immor-

* He was the father of the future king Stanislas.

talities which they have shown to me. He will find, by the traces of their blood, the road to the country of the Tartars, and the deserts of Walachia. He will hear issuing from the bosom of the earth, and beneath the cold marble, voices which cry, *Let them learn from me how honourable and sweet it is to die for our country!* I could invoke the memory of my father, the glory he had, of being called four times to preside in the assemblies in this sanctuary of our laws, and the name of buckler of liberty which he deserved. * * * Believe me, all this tribunitian eloquence would be better employed against those who, by their factions, invoke upon our country that cry of the prophet which I seem, alas! already to hear resounding over our heads: ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!’”

The most remarkable circumstance that occurred in this session was the trial of Lysinski, a Lithuanian nobleman, for atheism. He was, in fact, a religious and benevolent man, but sufficiently intelligent to ridicule some of the current superstitions. He was unfortunately rich, and that was the principal witness against him. The ground of accusation was a note which he had made on a book written by a stupid German, to prove the existence of a Deity. The reasoning was inconclusive; which Lysinski observing, wrote on the margin, *ergo non est Deus*. He was tried by some bigoted Catholic bishops, and found guilty, “not only of having denied the existence of a God, but the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divine maternity of the Virgin Mary.”

Zaluski was one of those villains who were concerned in the torment, an office which even the most degraded systems of theology have allotted to devils. We will let him condemn himself out of his own mouth. “The convict was led to the scaffold,” he says, “where the executioner first, with a red-hot iron, tore his tongue and his mouth, *with which he had been cruel towards God*; then they burnt his

hands, instruments of the abominable production, at a slow fire. The sacrilegious paper was thrown into the flames,—himself last: that monster of the age, that deicide, was cast into the flames of expiation, if such a crime could be atoned!" To prevent his escape, they even violated one of the laws, that no nobleman is to be apprehended till convicted. The king did not interfere to stop the hellish execution, but allowed the annals of Poland, till that time so free from the disgrace of persecution, to be now sullied. Even the pope discountenanced the inhuman and unjust cruelty.

Nor were the reproaches of his diet the only vexations John had to endure; his sons, imitating the intrigues of their father, gave him perpetual uneasiness. "It will be easier for me," said he, when setting out for his last campaign in 1691, "to get the better of the enemy I am going in quest of than of my own sons." This was the last time he unsheathed the sword, and it was again to no purpose. He was now sixty-one years old, and two-thirds of that time had been spent in "the tented field." His health was broken with vexation, and his frame shattered with his wounds.

Sobieski had outlived his glory; he was now nothing but a sick dotard, nursed and managed by his wife. She was continually rendering her husband and herself more and more obnoxious to the people. She intrusted the care of the king's health to a Jesuit, a physician of the name of Jonas, and engaged another of the same persuasion to farm his estates. The latter, whose name was Bethsal, besides extorting great sums from the Poles, had the audacity to enter into a traffic of offices with the queen's connivance. This excited the greatest indignation; and a petty war of brochures and caricatures was begun to the great annoyance of the government. One of the pictures represented a foreign negotiator counting out money to Bethsal.

who was examining it very carefully; the king completed the group, and was busied in secreting a portion of the treasure in the corner of his robe. In another print, John appeared feeble and childish, sitting on the lap of a young woman, and suckled by an old one. He seemed to be shrinking under the weight of many crowns, which were, however, made to appear tarnished, and stripped of their ornaments.

But the public did not content themselves with these harmless attacks; frequent attempts were made to assassinate the hated publican, which he frustrated by having in pay a guard of thirty Polish nobles. His time came at last; he was disgraced, and died in poverty.

Under such a government every thing was fast verging to decay; the diets were no sooner assembled than dissolved, that Truth might not be allowed a hearing; riots and fights were substituted for debate; the soldiers were clamouring for their arrears, and levying contributions on the people. The generals set at defiance all authority, and were engaged only in their own aggrandizement. "All the departments of government which require strict superintendence, such as the command of the troops and the management of the revenue, intrusted to generals and ministers independent of all authority but that of the diet, were without control."* Happily for Sobieski, he was not doomed to witness the consequences of this villanous administration; death came kindly and laid low his gray locks with their withered laurels, before the rude hand of rebellion had succeeded in tearing them from his brow.

The 17th of June, 1696, was his last day of trouble. He revived for a few moments from his insensibility only to regret that he was alive again. "I was then well," said he; a sad confession of misguided heroism, effete renown, and disappointed ambition!

* Rulhière.

When the mighty is fallen, the most low and dastardly will stride over his body to see "where his great strength lay," and descant on his weakness.

" ——— ἄλλοι δὲ περὶ δροαμον νῖες Ἀχαιῶν,
Οἳ καὶ θηήσαντο φυὴν καὶ εἶδος ἀγητὸν
Ἐκτορος· οὐδ' ἄρα οἱ τις ἀνουντητί γε παρέστη."

The vulture will feed on the dead lion, and the carrion crow will peck at the stranded whale. The corpse of Sobieski furnishes the same treat for those birds of prey, the petty critic and the musty moralist. But Fame puts her finger on her lips as she points to the death-bed of John Sobieski. Those tattered Turkish banners, as they sprinkle their dust on the cold corpse of the hero beneath, awaken more thought and solemn reflection in one glance, than the tongue could exhaust in hours.

In his person, says his physician,* "he was a tall and corpulent prince, large-faced, and full-eyed, and went always in the same dress with his subjects."† His character is portrayed in his political career, and his actions speak for themselves. In war he was a lion, but in peace he was the plaything of others. Had he lived in the age of barbarous heroism, he would have been a Hercules bending before an Omphale.

Glorious as the reign of Sobieski had been in many particulars, it has had a most pernicious effect on the destiny of Poland. This is fully exemplified in the preceding pages, and the melancholy truth will but too often present itself to the thinking mind

* Connor.

† "The king was a well-spoken prince, of very easy access, and extremely civil, and had most of the good qualities requisite in a gentleman; he was not only well versed in military affairs, but likewise in all polite and scholastic learning; besides his own tongue, the Slavonian, he understood the Latin, French, Italian, German, and Turkish languages; he delighted much in natural philosophy, and in all parts of physic; he used to reprimand the clergy for not admitting in the universities and schools the modern philosophy; he loved to hear persons discourse of these matters."—Connor, let. iv

in the subsequent narrative. Similar remarks are applicable to the state of learning in this period. More books, perhaps, were printed now than in the two preceding reigns, and there were more literary names; but it was all the conventual learning of the Jesuits. Sobieski himself was a patron of learning, and many are found who extol his talents and spirit of inquiry; but his philosophical conversations, which they adduce in proof,* are evidences indeed of his love of knowledge, but neither of a very free-thinking nor free-spirited mind. It would scarcely be going too far, perhaps, to say that this would also give a tolerably just estimate of the literary and scientific character of the whole of the Polish nation under his administration.

CHAPTER V.

Augustus II., Elector of Saxony, raises himself to the Throne—Detains his Saxon Troops in Poland—Makes Peace with Turkey—Attempts to seize Livonia—Forms an Alliance with Peter the Great of Russia—Defeated by Charles XII. of Sweden—Dethroned by Charles XII.—Stanislas raised to the Throne—Augustus resumes the Crown, and is again deposed—Charles defeated at Pultowa—Augustus reascends the Throne—Charles XII. Prisoner in Turkey—Returns to Sweden—Attempt to assassinate Stanislas—Death of Charles—Oppression of the Protestants—Death of Augustus.

SOBIESKI and his intrigues, so long a stumbling-block of offence in the eyes of the Poles, were no more; but the rancour and vehemence of contention still survived. A people in this dissentient state of feeling were not likely to be calm, impartial adjudicators. While the most powerful Polish and foreign interests were nullifying each other by opposition, a noble of inferior rank and influence started a new

* One of these metaphysical discussions is given by Connor

candidate, and carried his point. This was no other than John Przependowski, Castellan of Culm, who had first united with the Prince of Conti, one of the most popular of the candidates for the Polish crown. But he wished to derive some profit from his vote,* and finding the prince's finances exhausted, he looked round the different courts for another patron. He was bold and born for intrigue, and therefore well adapted for his present purpose. He had married the daughter of General Flemming, who was then in high favour with Frederic Augustus, Elector of Saxony, and afterward his prime minister. This connexion brought him in contact with the elector, whom he found just suited for his design. Augustus was a young, wealthy, ambitious monarch: "No prince was ever more generous," says Voltaire, "gave more, or accompanied his gifts with so much grace." His religion, professedly the Lutheran, stood in the way; but there is something that will remove more mountains than faith, and it was opportunely remembered that the young elector had recanted the reformed belief two years before, during a sojourn at Rome, and he was now as good a Catholic as the Poles or the *pacta conventa* could require.

Money purchased Augustus plenty of votes, but as he was late in the field, there were some too firmly engaged by the Prince of Conti to be decently transferred. The consequence was, that on the 27th of June, 1697, both were elected by their different partisans, the archbishop declaring Conti king, and the bishop of Kuiavia Augustus. But notwithstanding the informality of the latter election, nothing was to be said to the 10,000 Saxons, with whom he came to take possession of his kingdom; he was acknowledged king, and the Prince of Conti sailed back to France unanointed.

* See Hist. des Révolutions de Pologne, par M. l'Abbé Fontaines, tom. ii. p. 128.

But Augustus had not yet been crowned, a ceremony essentially requisite to invest him with full authority; and he was anxious that it should take place. There was some difficulty even in this; all the regalia were locked up in the treasury at Cracow in the keeping of officers in Conti's interest. The law forbade breaking open the *doors*, but the Saxons "laughed at locksmiths" and broke down the wall. It was also necessary that the archbishop should perform the ceremony, but he also was in the other interest; the diocese was therefore declared vacant, and newly filled. There was still another impediment;—the funeral of the late king ought to precede the inauguration, and the corpse was in the hands of Conti's party at Warsaw; but the Saxons substituted an effigy, and the coronation was solemnized, and the elector proclaimed king under the title of Augustus II.* It was observed that the king fainted during the formalities, as if his heart failed him at the thoughts of the charge he was taking on himself.

This forced election was the first of the disgraceful series of events which laid the yoke on the necks of the Poles, and at last rendered them mere bondsmen. Since this period Poland has always received her kings under the compulsion of foreign arms.† The czar and the King of Sweden even offered to support the present election; but Augustus found that he and his Saxons were sufficiently strong to fight their own battles.

The *pacta conventa* required Augustus to dismiss his own troops; but he was too prudent to trust himself to subjects who were not yet reconciled to his "usurpation," and looked about for a pretext to retain them. This was readily found; he employed them against the Turks, and the Poles were satisfied.

* The first Augustus was Sigismund Augustus.

† Rulhière.

But this war was ended by the treaty of Carlowitz,* in January, 1699, and the king was obliged to find them another occupation. This also too soon presented itself. Sweden was now under the government of a minor,† and as Poland had long looked with a lingering eye on Livonia, which had been ceded by the treaty of Oliva, in John Casimir's time, he thought it would be a favourable juncture to attempt its recovery; and the service of the Saxons in that undertaking would make the Poles forgive their intrusion. He attempted it entirely at his own risk, without the concurrence of the Poles, and in fact in direct opposition to some of their representations. The bishop who had crowned him told the king, "his attack on Sweden was a gross violation of the rights of nations and of equity, which the Almighty would not fail to punish;" a judgment, says the historian, which seems to be dictated by the spirit of divination.

His first attempt was not so successful as he had anticipated, and he engaged Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, to assist him. Peter entered very willingly into the plan; he wished to found a port on the east of the Baltic; Ingria, the north-east part of Livonia, seemed just adapted for it, and he thought it would pay him very well for his share of the enterprise. The meeting took place on the 26th of February, 1701 at Birze,‡ a small town in the palatinate of Wilna in Lithuania. But the monarchs did not devote the time solely to business; drunkenness and debauchery seemed a fit preparative for such iniquitous treaties. For fifteen days Peter the Great, the civilizer of Russia,§ and Augustus were in a continued state of intoxication. The contract was

* By this treaty the Poles regained Kamiéniec, but gave up their encroachment in Moldavia, &c.

† Charles XII., then not eighteen.

‡ Commonly known by the name of Birzen.

§ "The czar," says Voltaire, "who could reform his nation, could never correct in himself his dangerous propensity to debauchery."

made in the midst of such a scene; an unjust war, which deprived thousands of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons, was made the freak of a drunken revel.

But Charles, the young Swedish monarch, although only eighteen, was not to be made the tame victim of such flagrant injustice. He was apprized of their designs, and chose to anticipate them. He had routed the Russians at Narva in the preceding year, and made even Moscow tremble. But Justice fought for him, and his soldiers were animated by the example of their youthful hero. These were the troops whom the Russian savages called "terrible; insolent, enraged, dreadful, untameable destroyers."* He then marched against the Saxons in Livonia, and came up to them on the banks of the Dwina. The river was very wide at the spot and difficult to pass, but Charles was never to be daunted. He caused large boats to be prepared with high bulwarks to protect the men, and observing that the wind was in the enemy's face, lit large fires of wet straw, and the smoke spreading along the banks of the river, concealed his operations from the Saxons. He directed the passage himself, which was effected in a quarter of an hour, and he was much mortified at being only the fourth to land. He rallied his troops and routed the Saxons. He did not stop till he arrived at Birze, the town where Augustus and the czar had planned the expedition. He felt, he owned, a satisfaction at entering Birze as a conqueror, where the leagued monarchs had conspired his ruin some few months before.

What a different scene was the court of the water-drinker Charles from that which the drunken Peter had held here! and the difference did not pass unnoticed. As the young warrior was sitting in this place one day at table, observing his usual sobriety, and

* See the public prayer used by the Russians after their defeat.—Voltaire, *Hist. of Charles XII.*

apparently buried in his grand designs, a German colonel, who was in waiting, remarked in his hearing, that the feasts which the czar and Augustus had made here were very unlike his majesty's. "Yes," said the king, starting up, "and I shall make them digest them less easily." From that moment the dethronement of Augustus was fixed.

The news of Charles's approach was nearly as agreeable to most of the Poles as it was terrible to Augustus; they considered him as their champion against the tyrannical and intruding Saxons. The primate wrote to the Swedish king, assuring him of this feeling; and Charles expressed himself as the friend of Poland, although the enemy of their sovereign. Augustus was aware of this, and dismissed the Saxon troops, to regain the favour of his subjects. This step had the desired effect for a time: the primate, traitor as he was to both parties at heart, pretended to rouse the king's awakening popularity which he could not check; and the people were so gratified by the concession, that most of the influential palatines swore to defend their sovereign to the death. This adherence to their falling monarch was daily increasing, when unfortunate dissensions in Lithuania once more severed the bond of union. That province had been divided into two contending factions ever since the death of Sobieski; and party-spirit had run so high that the contest became quite a civil war. The family of Sapieha, the great general of Lithuania, and that of Oginski, the great standard-bearer, were the leading interests. As long as the Saxons remained in Lithuania, Sapieha was protected from the violence of Oginski, who was backed by most of the nobility; but after their departure, he and his adherents were left exposed, so that their only alternative was to make the Swedes their protectors. Under these circumstances Augustus could offer but little opposition to Charles, and a deputation was sent to the Swedish monarch, with

proposals for peace. "I will make peace at Warsaw," was the young but firm warrior's answer; and at the same time he added, that he came to make war on Augustus the usurper, and his Saxons, and not against the Poles.

Augustus now saw the tide was against him, and despaired of gaining his point by direct sailing; he therefore tried another tack. He felt the inutility of ministerial persuasion on the Swedish monarch; but Charles was young, and youth, he thought, might listen to the wiles of beauty, although it turned a deaf ear to the arguments of bearded lips. The Countess of Königsmark* seemed eminently qualified to try the experiment of laying siege to the inflexible warrior's heart. She was beautiful, talented, and witty, mistress of foreign languages, and well skilled in the tact of conversation. She was, besides, of Swedish birth, had considerable estates in Sweden, and was familiar with that court; so that she seemed to have a claim on the entrée to Charles's audience-chamber. She accordingly repaired to the enemy's camp in Lithuania; but had the mortification to find that all her beauty and accomplishments were lost on the Swedish monarch, for he obstinately refused to see her. She waylaid him, pursued him, dodged him in his rides, but the rough Adonis still escaped from his artful Venus. At length, one day, she plotted so well that she pounced upon him in a narrow lane, and was at his feet before he was aware of it: the insensible king saluted her without speaking a word, turned his horse's head, and was out of sight in an instant.

His last and most sanguine hope being blighted, Augustus felt that all was lost, and that his kingdom had departed from him. But he yet fought up against fortune: he had privately recalled his Saxons, and then assembling all the troops he could, mustered

* She was one of the mistresses of Augustus, and mother of Marshal Saxe.

nearly 24,000 men. Augustus now found himself in that perplexing dilemma in which all kings who thrust themselves upon a people by force are always at some period deservedly placed. The Poles, at best only lukewarm in his cause, were converted into ardent enemies by this recall of the Saxons. While Augustus was engaged in marching from palatinate to palatinate, to canvass his partisans, Charles pushed on unopposed to Warsaw, which capitulated on the first summons, on the 5th of May, 1702. Augustus, however, marshalled his troops in the plain of Klissow, and waited for the arrival of the Swedes to fight for his crown. Even now his army doubled that of Charles; but the Poles, who composed the greater part of it, did not engage willingly. Augustus indeed fought bravely; but in vain did he rally his troops: three times they again recoiled. Fortune still frowned on the Polish monarch, and he fled towards Cracow. An accident favoured his escape, and prolonged the struggle:—Charles had a fall from his horse as he was pursuing him, and was detained in bed six weeks on his march. Augustus made good use of this respite, reassembled his troops, and prepared for another battle; but discontent and rebellion thinned his ranks: the Poles dreaded further opposition to the formidable invader, and began to fall into his will, in consenting to raise to the throne James Sobieski, the eldest son of their late monarch. Against such numerous enemies, no resistance could be offered: protraction of the war was useless, for difficulties only stimulated the Swedish hero. "Should I have to stay here fifty years," said he, "I will not go till I have dethroned the King of Poland." Augustus therefore fled to Saxony, taking however the precaution to secure the persons of James Sobieski and his brother Constantine.

The throne being thus vacated, it only remained for Charles to fill it; but he was for some time undetermined who should be the chosen person. His

counsellors advised him to step into it himself; but fate, in the shape of military glory, diverted him from that design. He first fixed on Alexander, Sobieski's third son. He, however, only wished for the enlargement of his brothers, and to revenge them, having none of the *libidinem dominandi*; and it was in vain that the King of Sweden and the nobles entreated him to change his mind; he was immoveable. The neighbouring princes, says Voltaire, knew not whom to admire most, the King of Sweden, who at the age of twenty-two years gave away the crown of Poland, or the Prince Alexander, who refused it.

But kingdoms do not long go begging; and all men are not so disinterested as Alexander Sobieski. When Charles told young Stanislas Leszczynski, the Polish deputy, that the republic could not be delivered from its troubles without an election;—"But whom can we elect," said Stanislas, "now James and Constantine Sobieski are captives?" The king looked with an eye of scrutiny at his interrogator, and thought to himself, "Thou art the man!" He, however, deferred that answer until he had further examined his young protégé.

Stanislas was descended from an illustrious Polish family; his father was crown-treasurer and Palatine of Posnania, to which latter office his son succeeded. He added to innate talent the polish of education, and commerce with society both at home and abroad. "Stanislas Leszczynski," said one of his contemporaries, "the son of the grand-treasurer of the crown, is regarded among us as the honour of our country. A happy facility of manners makes him win his way to all hearts." He was courageous, and at the same time mild in his disposition, and had a very prepossessing appearance. In fact, Charles was so much struck with him, that he said aloud he had never seen a man so fit to conciliate all parties. He was also sufficiently hardy and inured to service to please the rough king in that respect; and after

the conference the Swedish monarch exclaimed, "There is a man who shall always be my friend!" and Stanislas was King of Poland.

But the formality of election was observed, although it was, in fact, nothing but a ratification of Charles's choice. Many other candidates were also nominated; and though Stanislas was the most popular among them as well as the nominee of the lord of the ascendant, the primate, RadzieŃowski, objected to him, ostensibly on account of his youth. "What?" said Charles. "He is too young," answered the primate. "He is not so young as myself,"* replied the king, impatiently, and he sent the Swedish count, Horn, to Warsaw to enforce the election. Horn met, however, with some resistance from the independent Poles. "Are we assembled," said one of the nobles, "to act in concert for the ruin of Poland, whose glory and safety depend wholly on the freedom of the people and the liberty of the constitution? Let our independence be our first care, then let us think of an election. Shall we call that revolution legitimate which springs from fear of being hewn down by the troops of armed foreigners who surround us, and insult the dignity of the republic with their presence?" Several nobles, roused by this appeal, entered their protests, which, according to law, would check the election; but this trifling opposition was disregarded, the Swedes shouted, "Long live Stanislas Leszczynski, King of Poland!" and the election was registered. The constitution was certainly infringed by the Swedish influence, but Augustus was not a fit person to complain of unconstitutional acts.

Stanislas was no sooner seated on the throne, and enjoying the honeymoon of royalty at Warsaw, than the alarm-bell sounded, and Augustus, with an army of 20,000 Saxons, was seen marching to regain

* Charles was twenty-two, and Stanislas twenty-seven.

his capital. The city was unfortified, and the new king was obliged to flee with his family to their protector, Charles. The work of dethronement was now to be all done over again. The Swedish monarch had not lost any of his activity; he overtook Augustus unexpectedly in Posnania, and a battle was fought at Punitz, on the borders of Silesia. The Saxon army consisted almost entirely of foot, whereas the enemy were all cavalry. Augustus now first showed modern tacticians that it is not impossible for infantry to withstand the charge of cavalry. Schullemburg directed the evolutions, and he was not unworthily supported by the king, although he had received five wounds. The Saxons found the utility of that military disposition which British generals have adopted in late wars, and on which they have so much prided themselves. They formed themselves into solid bodies, presenting on all sides a hedge of bayonets. The Swedish cavalry in vain attempted to break their ranks; the Saxons stood their ground till night-fall, although inferior in number, and made good their retreat. This was certainly no contemptible specimen of the military talents of Augustus, although a great portion of the credit is of course to be given to the skill of Schullemburg.

The Saxon army retreated, and the Swedes followed and overtook them again on the banks of the Oder. Charles now imagined they must fall into his hands, as they were unprovided with pontoons or boats to effect the passage, but in this he was mistaken. Schullemburg passed his whole army over during the night with a very trifling loss; and Charles himself was obliged to own that "To-day Schullemburg has the better of us."

Notwithstanding all this display of courage and tactics, Augustus could not support his falling fortune, and again withdrew to Saxony. Charles, tired of having to fight his battles over again so often in

Poland, resolved to put an end to the Saxons' occasional excursions, by carrying the war into their own country. Augustus now began to tremble; the Swedish king could as easily appoint a new elector as a new king. To avoid these consequences he submitted to the conditions Charles imposed. These were, to resign all pretensions to the crown of Poland, to break off all treaties against Sweden, and to set at liberty the two Sobieskis.

After these preliminaries were settled, Charles and the ex-king had an interview at a place called Guttersdorp, or Gutersdorf. The Swedish king was as usual in his military uniform, a coarse blue coat with gilt buttons and jack-boots. The conversation, as may be imagined, was not very lively; they were not so friendly disposed to each other as to chat without reserve. Besides, Charles was no talker, and most probably his taciturnity was a cover for his want of information. The only subject he started for the amusement of Augustus was his jack-boots. These he gravely assured him had never been off his legs for six years, except when he lay down. That men who can find nothing to talk about but jack-boots should rule the destinies of millions!

But at length the Swedish monarch began a theme even more distasteful to Augustus than jack-boots. He required him to write Stanislas a letter of congratulation on his accession to the throne: this was, indeed, making the ex-king feel his debasement. The letter ran as follows:

“SIRE AND BROTHER,

“We have not considered it necessary to enter into a private correspondence with your majesty; nevertheless, to please his Swedish majesty, and that they may not charge us with any disinclination to satisfy his wish, we congratulate you hereby on your accession to the crown, and hope that you will find in your country more faithful subjects than those we

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have left there. Everybody will do us the justice to believe that we have been paid by ingratitude for all our benefits, and that most of our subjects have only exerted themselves to hasten our ruin. We hope that you may not be exposed to like misfortunes, recommending you to God's protection.

"Your brother and neighbour,
"AUGUSTUS, King."

"Dresden, April 8, 1707."

To this Stanislas replied,—

"SIRE AND BROTHER,

"Your majesty's communication is to me a fresh obligation from the King of Sweden. I feel obliged for your congratulation on my ascent to the throne; I trust that my subjects will never have reason to be wanting in their fidelity to me, as I shall observe the laws of the kingdom.

"STANISLAS, King of Poland."

In the mean time Peter the Great was not idle; he felt much aggrieved that Augustus had capitulated without his knowledge; but he forgave him on hearing how severely he was already punished by the hard conditions of the treaty. The Russians, under the command of Menzikoff, overran Poland in the absence of Charles and Augustus, who were in Saxony; forming a rallying point for the adherents of the ex-king, and plundering the opposite party. In fact, Peter treated Poland more as a vanquished province than an allied state, ravaging, levying contributions, and carrying off all the valuables he could lay hands on. The news that Stanislas and Charles were returning from Saxony soon put a check to this injustice and obliged him to retreat.

As Charles's army was on its march to Poland, it passed near Dresden, and the king, who was usually a few hundred steps in advance of his guard, was suddenly missed, and at the moment none could give

any account of him. Being so near the ex-king's residence, he formed a momentary resolution to pay him a passing visit. A horseman, accompanied by two or three officers, had passed the gates under the name of Carl, and hurrying to the palace, presented Augustus with the unexpected apparition of his conqueror, Charles XII. of Sweden, with his coarse blue coat, gilt buttons, and jack-boots. He did not come, however, to make any further demands, but after paying his compliments, which were no doubt very sparing, ended his singular visit, and marched on against the Russians.

The fate of Stanislas was so completely dependent on that of Charles, that the history of the latter is also the history of the former. The Swedish hero, leaving his protégé in Poland, pursued the czar, who had retired into Lithuania, although it was in the month of January, 1708. The result of this singular campaign forms one of fame's commonplaces :

“——dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,”

at once stripped Charles of the title of Invincible, the hard earnings of nine years' victories, drove him to seek an asylum in Turkey, and dragged Stanislas from the Polish throne.

Augustus, on hearing this unexpected news, immediately returned to Poland, and resumed the diadem in spite of his oath.* The pope's dispensation sanctioned the perjury; Polish inconsistency favoured the new revolution; and the victorious arms of Russia confirmed all. Stanislas knew it was in vain to resist, and did not wish to shed blood in a useless struggle; he therefore retired to Swedish Pomerania. He defended that province against the united Rus-

* The details of all these singular events may be seen in “*Mémoires sur les Dernières Révolutions de la Pologne*, par Prebendofski. Rotterdam, 1710,” and in the “*Histoire des Révolutions de Pologne*, par M. l'Abbé des Fontaines.”

sians, Saxons, Poles, and Swedes, and Augustus wished to put an end to the contest. Stanislas agreed to abdicate, but Charles's consent was required to satisfy the newly-raised king. The Swede, "proud though in desolation," merely answered to all the persuasions, "If my friend will not be king, I can soon make another." Stanislas determined to try what could be effected by a personal interview, and "risking more," says Voltaire, "to abdicate a throne than he had done to ascend it," undertook to travel in disguise through the midst of his enemies to Charles's retreat in Turkey. He stole one evening from the Swedish army which he commanded in Pomerania, and traversing the enemy's lines with a passport under the name of Haran, after many dangers reached Jassy, the capital of Moldavia. He here styled himself a major in Charles's service, not knowing that the king was at that time far from a good understanding with the Porte. On this hint the suspicions of the Turkish officer were awakened, who, being acquainted with the ex-king's person by description, saw through the disguise and arrested him.

Among other questions which the Turk put to his prisoner was, what rank he had held in the Swedish service. "*Major sum*," said Stanislas. "*Imo maximus es*," retorted the officer, confirmed in his conjecture. He was thenceforth treated as a captive, though as a king, and the Porte ordered him to be conveyed to Bender at the very moment that Charles was removing to his temporary prison.

"Tell him," exclaimed the inflexible Swede when he heard of his apprehension, "never to make peace with Augustus; assure him fortune will soon change!"*

* Even when Charles was confined at Adrianople he persisted obstinately in this opinion. In a letter which he wrote to Stanislas from that place, he says, "We must not be intimidated by all that the evil designing can contrive to ruin us. I have that firm reliance on your

This prediction seemed about to be verified, when the Turks, stimulated by the intrigues of the Swedish monarch, took up arms against the Russians, and investing Peter on the banks of the Pruth, obliged him to make that famous capitulation in 1711. By this he was bound to withdraw all his troops from Poland, and never interfere in the affairs of that government; besides which, Charles was to be ensured an unmolested return to his own kingdom.

Peter was, however, no sooner out of danger than he forgot his oath, and instead of withdrawing his troops from Poland, reinforced them. In 1712, great complaints were made about this encroachment, and the czar pretended to countermand them, but still kept them on the confines of Lithuania.

In 1714 Charles returned to Sweden, and at the same time Stanislas, resigning all pretensions to Poland, retired to the little duchy of Deux-Ponts in Germany, which was presented to him by the King of Sweden, who possessed it by inheritance. He remained there till he was deprived of it by Charles's death.

The return of the Swedish monarch was a pretext for retaining the Saxon troops in Poland. But even this excuse did not satisfy the justly discontented Poles; they avenged the insults and ravages of these intruders by the lives of many hundreds of them. This was the declaration of open war between the king's troops and the confederated nobles. Augustus in vain opposed his infuriated subjects, and after his army had been almost annihilated, called upon the czar for assistance. This induced the confederates to negotiate; and under the terror of a Russian army, peace was concluded between

majesty's prudence, that you will continue to defend our common interests with the same courage and with the same constancy that you have done hitherto; and that by your glorious example, you will animate the Poles to do the same."—From the MSS. in the Library at Nancy. See *Cœuvres choisies de Stanislas, &c., par M^{me}. de St. Ouen*.

the monarch and his people in 1717. It was then agreed that the Saxons should leave the kingdom, and this engagement was accordingly kept. At the same time the Polish army was decreased to 18,000 men, under the pretence of curbing the influence of the two grand-generals. This was a most pernicious step to the independence of Poland, as it extended its defence almost entirely to the *pospolite*, who could never compete with the large standing armies which were now kept up by its neighbours. "Imprudent nation! which allowed itself to be disarmed at the very moment when new dangers were about to threaten it; which almost solely intrusted its defence to the convocations of the *pospolite*, at a time when all the other nations of Europe had discovered the inutility and abandoned the use of that mode of protection."*

In the mean time Peter had obtained all the Livonian territory he aimed at, and was willing to embrace the schemes of the Swedish minister to enter into a treaty with Charles, to re-establish Stanislas, make a descent on England, and in fact become the arbiter of Europe. The conferences were carried on with the greatest secrecy, but sufficient transpired to make Augustus tremble. His minister, Flemming (with or without his master's concurrence is a question), employed some French miscreants to carry off Stanislas and bring him prisoner to Dresden. This he thought would be a bar to the inimical designs of the allies. The villains were discovered and taken before the ex-king as assassins, expecting summary punishment; but the beneficent and philosophic Stanislas reproved them mildly, "What injury have I done you, my friends?" said he; "and if none, why should you attempt my life? Were I to retaliate I should take away yours; but I forgive you; live and become better."

* Rulhière.

This was acting up to his own aphorism, "We are amply revenged by having the power to pardon;"* and gives him a stronger claim to the title of "beneficent philosopher" than all his writings, were they a hundred times more voluminous.

The King of Poland publicly disclaimed all knowledge of the plot, but we must leave his protestation to plead for itself. At that time it had the effect of shifting the onus of censure to Flemming's shoulders, and at any rate the minister was not unjustly scandalized.

The death of Charles, in 1718, broke the alliance, and averted the danger which threatened Augustus. Such was the termination of the unjust attack on Livonia: Peter was the only gainer, while the King of Poland had been dethroned, plundered of his treasures in Saxony, and had only recovered his crown by breaking his oath, sacrificing his power and becoming almost a mere Russian viceroy.

Poland now enjoyed for some years a state of comparative peace, but it seemed likely to be disturbed, in 1726, by disputes about Courland. The dutchy had been held as a fief of the Poles ever since 1561, under the express condition that when the line of succession was extinct it should revert to Poland. The diet held in this year (1726), taking into consideration the old age of the childish duke, who in fact no longer held the reins of government, having been deprived of them by Ann, who was the niece of Peter the Great, and had married the late duke, determined to annex it to the kingdom, and accordingly sent commissioners to divide it into palatinates. But this the Courlanders stoutly resisted, and elected Count Maurice, of Saxony (Marshal Saxe), natural son of Augustus, their duke; an election that pleased neither the Poles nor the Rus-

* On est bien vengé quand on a le pouvoir de pardonner. *Pensées Diverses*.—See Stanislas's "Works of a Beneficent Philosopher."

sians, and was set aside, the dutchy remaining under the power of Russia till the death of Augustus.

The same diet held a debate on another singular event, which at the time threatened to be of some importance. Nearly two years before this time the Jesuits were making a public procession with the Host in the streets of Thorn, and some young scholar of the order insisted that the children who were present should kneel. This they refused to do, being Lutherans, as were most of the inhabitants of the city, and a scuffle ensued. The offending Jesuit was taken into custody, and his order, highly incensed, imperatively demanded his release, which being refused, they attacked the citizens, and some blood was shed on both sides. The townspeople, enraged at this breach of their privileges, broke open the Jesuits' college, plundered it, profaned all the objects of worship, and among others an image of the Virgin. The Catholics of Poland, fired at the profanation, immediately came to the diet almost infuriated with fanatic zeal. A commission was appointed with absolute power to examine into the business, and punish the impiety. It was in vain the Lutherans pleaded their grievances; the magistrates were capitally condemned for not exerting their authority, seven other citizens suffered the same fate, and numbers were banished or imprisoned. Three persons, accused of throwing the Virgin's image into the fire, lost their right arms, and the whole city were deprived of the freedom of public worship.*

The persecuted dissidents carried their complaints before all the Protestant princes; and Prussia, Great Britain, and Sweden interested themselves in their behalf. Augustus began to fear the intervention of force; but the threat was *vox et præterea nihil*, and the poor Lutherans were left to digest their troubles with prayer and patience.

* Parthenay's History of Augustus II.

The king spent the rest of his reign in attempting to make the crown hereditary, and to stretch its prerogatives. The 31st of January, 1733, ended his eventful life, and gave the Poles another opportunity to save their falling country. The biographer of Augustus makes his funeral oration a series of antitheses, and seems to consider his character a sort of *lusus naturæ*, because it was a compound of many qualities. But he was like all other men in whose minds no one passion has established absolute monarchy over the rest; he rang the changes of pleasure and repentance, sense and folly, inaction and exertion. He kept a sumptuous court; and if the first part of his reign undermined the constitution of Poland, the latter part corrupted its morals. But notwithstanding his luxuries and extravagance, he amassed considerable wealth. It is said that he had collected at Dresden* porcelain to the value of twenty-four millions. So fond was he of trumpery of this kind that he gave Frederic William of Prussia, one of his most dangerous neighbours, his finest regiment of dragoons in exchange for twelve vases. He left his son twelve millions in his treasury, and an army of thirty-three thousand good troops, to purchase or seize the crown of Poland.

The reign of Augustus hastened the decline of the Polish nation by many conspiring causes, nor was it more favourable to the advance of learning; only luxury and sumptuousness were encouraged by this monarch's example. Many learned men, indeed, might be mentioned; but none who had any influence on the public mind. The slothful voluptuousness of the latter part of this reign, which succeeded the anarchy of the commencement, completed the ruin it had begun; and Augustus has left behind him the character of one of the most splendid as well as most

* The Green Vault (*Grüne Gewölbe*) of Dresden is still an object of curiosity, with its collection of gaudy but costly trifles.

athletic sovereigns of Poland, to be balanced against the irretrievable injury he has done both to this kingdom and his electoral dominions.*

CHAPTER VI.

Stanislas re-elected—The Russians enter Poland and proclaim the Elector of Saxony King—Siege of Dantzic—Escape of Stanislas from Dantzic—Stanislas abdicates—Augustus III.—Count Brühl, Prime Minister—Intrigues of the Czartoryski Family—Frederick the Great invades Saxony—The Death of the Empress Elizabeth terminates the War—Intrigues of Poniatowski and Catharine—Life, Education, &c. of Poniatowski—Catharine murders Peter and is proclaimed Empress—Poniatowski's Disappointment—His Intrigues—Factions against Augustus—Death of Augustus.

AFTER the death of Augustus, the Poles turned their eyes towards their ex-king, Stanislas. During his exile, his daughter, Mary Leszczyński, had become Queen of France, and the French king (Louis XV.) interested himself in the election of his father-in-law. But Stanislas had experienced the precariousness of Polish popularity, and felt the influence of Poland's neighbours too keenly to enter into the lists with very sanguine hopes. "I feel," said he, before his departure from France, "that I shall soon be near my enemies, and far from my friends." His reluctance was combated and overcome by persuasion, and the repeated invitation of the Poles; and he consented to wear the diadem once more.

But the intrigues of the late king to bring in his son as his successor had not been entirely useless:—a considerable party supported his pretensions;

* Many wonderful feats of strength are still related of Augustus, such as that he could lift a trumpeter in full armour in the palm of his hand. His immense cuirass and helmet, which are shown even to the present day in the *Rustkammer*, or armoury of Dresden, bear at least some partial testimony to the truth of these traditions.

Russia was tempted by the new elector's promises to resign all claim to Courland and to advance his interests; while Austria, glad of an opportunity to become the arbitress of an adjacent state, determined to ensure her client's election, and thwart their rival, France. These two powers took the most careful precautions to intercept Stanislas on his way to Poland; a Russian fleet was cruising on the Baltic, and the authorities of Germany were on the alert to cut off any approach by land. A stratagem readily frustrated this design; it was generally announced in France that Stanislas would go by sea, and to add apparent confirmation to the report, the Chevalier de Thianges, who strongly resembled him, embarked at Brest with all the formalities of royalty, and set sail for Dantzic under his name.

In the mean time the real Stanislas, in disguise, accompanied only by one gentleman, took the route through Germany. They travelled under the title of merchants, and eluded the vigilance of all the guards. They reached Warsaw almost on the very eve of the election; the announcement of Stanislas stifled all opposition, and on the 11th of September, 1733, the unanimous suffrages of 60,000 nobles proclaimed him king. But Russia and Austria were not to be easily foiled; the latter threatened, and the former marched an army of 60,000 to enforce its will, and make the deluded Poles feel that independence, once forfeited, is not readily to be redeemed. These barbarian troops plundered as they went; and the armies of the state, which had been so injudiciously decreased during the last reign, amounting now barely to 15,000 undisciplined men, could yield their fellow-subjects no protection; so that the affection even of the Poles was alienated from a king who was obliged to leave them to the mercy of their enemies.

The French court endeavoured to oppose the alliance of Turkey and Sweden against that of the

Russians and Austrians, but their aid was too distant to be of any service. The consequences were felt, indeed, for some years in Europe, but the interests of Poland were not one jot advanced by it, such was the overwhelming power of its enemies. Stanislas was again stripped of his ephemeral honours, and took refuge with his nobles in Dantzic, almost the only city in Poland which could stand a siege.

The Poles "summoned all their energies" to make a last and desperate resistance; they kept the Russians at bay on the other side of the Vistula till the legal term of election was nearly expired. It was not till the very last day allowed by law that they could force their passage to Warsaw, and they then assembled a small number of Polish nobles, some of whom were brought in chains, to elect Augustus III. King of Poland. This mockery of royalty over, they marched on Dantzic, where Stanislas was expecting them.

This city defended itself with great obstinacy for more than five months. Eight thousand of the assailants perished in one attack; and one part of the intrenchments is still called "the Russian cemetery." But no serviceable aid arrived from France; and Poland was too enfeebled and intimidated to provoke its tyrants still further. Treachery at length led to the surrender of Dantzic; the governor of one of the forts capitulated, and "then," says Stanislas, "the city had my permission to do the same."

This town was no longer a safe place of sojourn for the king, who was the principal or almost sole object of the besiegers' vengeance. Further resistance would only serve to involve the Dantzigers still more deeply in trouble; so that Stanislas resolved to leave the city, and advised it then to submit to unavoidable capitulation while it could obtain favourable conditions. He has himself described his hazardous and singular flight,* and the narrative forms a very

* Lettre de Stanislas, Roi de Pologne, à la Reine de France sur son Départ de Dantzic.—See the Works of Stanislas.

interesting portion of the works of oyal author. Count Poniatowski, Palatine of Mazovia, who had saved Charles XII. at Pultowa, and served him in Turkey, still adhered to the Swedish monarch's "friend;" and he was commissioned to announce the king's design to the citizens. One of the deputies of the city came up to the palatine as he was speaking, and said to him, "What, sir, do you speak seriously? Are these the true sentiments of the king our master?" "Yes," replied Poniatowski, "I have heard from his own lips what I have now the honour to announce to you."

"What!" added the deputy, "does the king himself exhort us to submit to the will of a conqueror?" The palatine answered in the affirmative. "Good God!" exclaimed this man again, "our king leaves us then? What is he going to do with himself?" At this instant he staggered, ceased to speak, and fell dead at the feet of Poniatowski.

It was on the night of the 27th of June that Stanislas left Dantzic, in the disguise of a peasant, and succeeded in passing safely beyond the enemy's lines. He was obliged to take shelter in a hut near the banks of the Vistula, from which, on the following morning, he could see the city walls crumbling before the artillery of the Russians. This, said the king to himself, is the reward of my subjects' fidelity. Stanislas, the man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief, who had so often shaken hands with misfortune, was unmanned at the sight, and shed tears. He was afterward in constant danger of falling into the hands of the Russians and Cossacks, and on one occasion his guides were so terrified that they threatened to leave him to his fate. "What, you cowards," said Stanislas, "do you mean to abandon me?" "Do you wish," retorted they, "that we should expose ourselves to be hung in ensuring your safety, which is nothing to us?" "Hung or not," exclaimed the king, with an affectation of rage, "you have no

longer any time to deliberate; you have engaged to accompany me, and you shall not quit me until I think I can dispense with your rascally company. Hear, and tremble at the resolution you make me take. If your promises, if your oaths, if the reward you expect, if the regard you owe me—if nothing can stop you, I will that moment call here the Cossacks; and if I must perish by your flight, I would as soon perish by my own indiscretion, and revenge myself at the same time for your perfidy." Stanislas was not, however, obliged to have recourse to this fatal expedient; his guides changed their tone, and he arrived safe at Marienwerder, a little town on the Prussian frontier. He was afterward kindly received by Frederic I., then king, and well lodged at Königsberg.

Lewis took up arms against the emperor, one of the princes inimical to his father-in-law. The result of this war was, that a treaty was signed at Vienna, in October, 1735, by which Stanislas was ensured the possession of his hereditary estates, the title and honours of King of Poland, and the duchies of Lorraine and Bar, which, after his death, were to devolve to the crown of France. It was also agreed, that his partisans should be reinstated in their estates and dignities; and on these conditions Stanislas renounced all pretensions to Poland. He then proceeded to his new sovereignty, and devoted himself to literature and philosophy, not forgetting that best philosophy, how to make his people happy.*

* The goodness of the "beneficent philosopher's" heart is exhibited in numberless instances, but none is more striking than his treatment of the children of the very Augustus who had deprived him of his throne and driven him from his country. When Frederic the Great overran Saxony in 1756, the elector, calculating on the generosity of Stanislas, absolutely confided his children to his protection. "Heaven," said the warm-hearted and forgiving philosopher, "no doubt drove me from my country that I might be able to afford you an asylum in misfortune; it is sweet to me to be able to revenge myself by kindness to you. You shall not be mere visitors in my court; and until the day when you embrace your father, I, my friends, I will supply his place. This excel-

The partisans of Stanislas still continued faithful to him; and while he was at Königsberg issued a protestation against the unlawful election of Augustus, and confederated themselves at a little village on the confines of Moldavia, on the 6th of August, 1735. The document was signed by the bishop of Kiow, Sapieha, grand-treasurer of Lithuania, and 244 other Polish senators.* In answer to this, Stanislas addressed a letter to them, entreating them to submit to necessity. "Will you follow," said he, "the counsels of him who will never cease to love you? Imitate my example, lay down your arms, and do not subject yourselves, by useless obstinacy, to the reproach of wishing to perpetuate trouble among your brothers."

In 1736 the Poles, in conformity to the wish of their exiled king, united in a diet of pacification. They still preserved the liberty of the tongue, and, even in the presence of Augustus, declared it a capital offence for any one in future to invite the aid of foreign troops. In this session, also, the dissidents were stripped even of their small remnant of power, being totally excluded from all share in the government.†

lent man lived to the advanced age of eighty-nine; but the extreme part of this long life was imbittered by the death of his grandson, the dauphin, a promising youth, with whose education immense labour and care had been taken, and who profited from his advantages. About six weeks after this sad event the venerable old king accidentally set fire to his clothes, and was so seriously burnt before assistance could be afforded him, that he died soon after, on Feb. 23, 1766.

For once the tombstone speaks the truth in summing up the character of Stanislas:

Hic jacet Stanislas I.
Cognomine beneficus,
Per varias sortis humanæ vices jactatus, non fractus
Ingens orbi spectaculum
Ubique vel in exilio, rex beandis populis natus,
Ludovici 15 generi complexi exceptus, &c.

* See Mdme. de St. Ouen's Work, p. 92. where the protestation is copied at full from the MSS. at Nancy.

† The number and influence of the dissidents, it will be remembered, had been greatly diminished in the last reign, and the diet of 1736 only executed a project which had been long meditated. The dissident nobles

If peace alone could have restored Poland, it would have been completely regenerated under the reign of Augustus. He devoted himself solely to the amusements of society and hunting; he imitated his father's luxurious magnificence, but it was more from habit than taste: he ruined himself with extravagance, without having any inclination for it, and in collecting pictures, without having any taste for them. He was a moral "good sort of man," and though strikingly handsome, continued inviolably faithful to his wife, the ugliest princess of the age. A habit of familiarity rendered Count Brulh his favourite and prime minister. This servile dependant made it his whole business to please the king, and enter into his amusements. But to others he was the proudest of men; and though his master was simple and unostentatious, he affected the very extreme of magnificence and pomp. In the midst of all the proud feelings of his heart, there lurked a servile superstition, which made him one of the most abject of creatures. This he studiously kept a secret however, till one day two visitors, entering his private apartments hastily, saw with surprise the proud and pompous minister on his knees, with his face to the ground, before an illuminated table. Brulh, rising hastily from his kneeling position, as if ashamed of being detected, said to them, "After having served my temporal master all day, I must give some few moments to eternity."

To the care of this man did Augustus intrust the interests of his kingdom, that he might pursue without interruption his favourite amusements. Saxony

were now ensured the possession of their property, and could hold any military or other offices which did not confer executive authority. They also still enjoyed the elective franchise, though they were not allowed to be deputies. They were also declared guilty of high-treason if they attempted to recover their privileges by the aid of foreign princes. These laws, since the cause of so much fatal discord to Poland, passed at the time without opposition, and even under the protection of Russian troops.—*Rulhière*, vol. i. p. 154.

was his most agreeable residence, and as he was obliged to return to Poland during the sessions of the diets, he was always pleased to see them suspended by the *liberum veto*, and always contrived to effect the rupture himself, if the deputies happened to be themselves unanimous. It is said that on one occasion, the diet being uncommonly long-lived, not knowing how to force a *veto*, he turned over the Polish laws, and discovered that it was illegal to debate by candlelight; accordingly he ordered his partisans to prolong the debate till night, and to call for candles. They were brought, and immediately the Poles, who "strain at a gnat," when privilege is concerned, exclaimed against the violation of the laws, and the diet was dissolved.

This was almost the invariable termination of the sessions, during the thirty years which this reign lasted. The state of affairs may be readily imagined: all public business was at an end; the chief officers were almost uncontrolled, and no ministers were sent to foreign courts. The *pospolite* neglected all military exercises, and became a mere mass of men, courageous, it is true, but without arms, without discipline, and equally incapable of commanding and obeying.*

While the generality of the Poles were enjoying this peace in idle voluptuousness, some few of the more powerful nobles were plotting the overthrow of the republic, and the establishment of a virtual monarchy. This party was headed by the princes Czartoryski, who were a branch of the Jagellon family. There were two of them, Augustus and Michael. The former was palatinate of Polish Russia, and had become master of great wealth by marrying a rich widow. This added to his rank and gave him immense influence, and he had thousands of partisans who almost considered him their only

* Rulhière, vol. i. p. 185.

monarch. His brother Michael was of a different character, and possessed another kind of influence, but equally powerful. He was a designing statesman, and added to his authority as grand-chancellor of Lithuania a complete mastery in the management of intrigues. It is said that he could count on his list of friends and partisans above a hundred thousand nobles, with all of whom he was intimately acquainted, and could estimate to a nicety their different interests. Their sister had married the Count Poniatowski, who distinguished himself as a firm adherent of Stanislas and of Charles XII. His father was an illegitimate son of one of the Sapieha family, and through their interest he had been introduced to the notice of the Swedish monarch.

Each of these three brothers had an eye to the throne, but so warily did they proceed in their designs that they avoided all collision. At the same time they conciliated the Russians and were apparently in their interest, but it was only with the view of lulling their suspicions to sleep and disarming their opposition. They were also the ostensible adherents of Augustus, and had a complete ascendancy over his minister Brühl.

Such was the political state of Poland in 1752, when England and France, on the eve of a war about their American colonies, were employing their envoys to secure the alliance of the different courts of Europe. The English minister contemplated the union of Russia, Saxony, and Poland (which seemed to form but one interest), together with Austria; and sent Sir Charles Hanbury Williams on a private mission to effect this negotiation at Warsaw, on his road to Russia.* This intriguing agent immediately

* Rulhière evidently commits a considerable error in his description of Williams's character. He says, that "He is still notorious in London for having attempted to establish pure deism under the form of a new religion," &c. It was David Williams who did this; after being a dissenting minister, he opened a chapel in Cavendish Square, in 1776, on the avowed principles of deism. This same person was one of the strenuous

saw the state of politics in Poland, and made the Czartoryskis his confidants. They entered with avidity into his schemes, trusting that the event of the negotiation would lead to a good opening for their designs; and engaged to support the plan with all their strength in the approaching diet, which was to be held at Grodno in the October of the same year.

France did not remain an idle spectatress of this intrigue, but employed Count Broglie to counterplot. He had a very difficult part to act; no faction was ready formed to enlist in his cause, but, on the contrary, all the Poles were distrustful of an alliance with France, who had always been a useless ally to Poland. In a word, says Rulhière, he stood alone. But, undaunted, he persevered in his attempt, and waited for circumstances, which he knew are sometimes the machines as well as prime movers of society.

The Czartoryskis employed one of the deputies to dissolve the diet, and at the same time to make a formal protestation against the king's conduct. Their motive in this was, to draw up a defence of Augustus, and under pretence of forming a confederation to defend him from faction, to make it subservient to their own views.

This plan was frustrated by the opposition of Count Branicki, grand-general of the kingdom, the most respected and powerful person in Poland. He was at the same time the firmest patriot in his country, and had stood up against every oppressor, from the king himself to the meanest noble. The Czartoryskis had sought his alliance, and trusted, that by marrying him to one of their nieces they had ensured his support. In this, however, they were mistaken;

advocates of the French revolution, and, what will be better remembered, he was founder of the "Literary Fund."—See Rulhière, vol. i. p. 206; and compare with Chalmer's Gen. Biog. Dict. and Gentleman's Magazine, 1816.

Branicki was ready to sacrifice all personal considerations to the welfare of his country. He did not, at first, perceive the design, and even added his name to the long list of confederates. But Mokranowski, a dependent Polish noble of the grand-general, penetrated the scheme, and boldly protested against it. He seized the signed document in the midst of the assembly, and hurrying with it to Branicki, pointed out to him the fatal consequences of allying with their rival Russia. After speaking to this effect, he tore the paper to pieces; and the astonished grand-general embraced him in a transport of admiration, and swore to him an eternal friendship.

Branicki now declared for Broglie and France; and Count Brulh seized with avidity this opportunity of escaping from his dependence on the Czartoryskis, and entered into a coalition with this new party in the name of his master. His real motive for this change was, to revenge himself on that powerful family for refusing his proffered alliance by marriage.

Russia found herself bound both to Augustus and the Czartoryskis, but the authority and wealth of England soon gave the latter interest the preponderance in her eyes, and she threatened Poland with an invasion in support of her clients. Three years had passed in these intrigues, and France, as faithless an ally as ever, forgot her promises, and left Augustus to extricate himself from the dilemma into which she had decoyed him.

But the year 1756 opened with a complete revolution in all the alliances of Europe, and averted the vengeance of Russia from the King of Poland. Austria, bent on recovering Silesia, which had been seized by Frederic the Great, leagued with France and Russia; the admission of France into the league threw her enemy, England, with whom she was at war on account of the American colonies, into the opposite party. Saxony was drawn into the former alliance by many obvious motives. Frederic en-

gaged with the English to divert the enemy from their Hanoverian possessions, and overran Saxony.

Augustus was obliged to abandon his electoral dominions to their fate, for the bad administration and extravagance of Brulh had rendered them almost defenceless. The following is a characteristic incident of the Saxon and Polish court. The king, when he found himself reduced to the necessity of flight, took the greatest care to save his pictures, antiques, and porcelain, and never gave a thought to the state-papers.

These circumstances reconciled for a time the two factions of Poland; and Russia was now as warm in the defence of Augustus as she had been before in opposition to him. A hundred thousand Russians marched through Poland on the road to Saxony, and the Empress Elizabeth, in addition to this assistance, resigned her pretensions to Courland, and permitted the king to nominate his third son Charles to the dukedom.

The Russian troops, after traversing the territories of their ally, and exacting contributions on their road, entered the Prussian dominions. Frederic defeated them at Zorndorf* in 1758, but so obstinately did they stand their ground even when they were butchered without quarter, that he exclaimed, "It is harder to kill them than to conquer them!" They, however, revenged themselves at Zulikaw and Custrin, and took possession of Berlin.

Frederic, surrounded with enemies, was almost reduced to the last extremity; he began to mistrust the energies of his veteran army of the seven years' war, and carried poison about him as a last resource of escape. Saxony was delivered from its invaders, and Augustus, in fancied security under the shield of Russia, was employing Brulh to engage her to ensure the succession to the Polish crown in his family.

* A village six miles to the north-east of Custrin, which is built at the confluence of the Wartha and Oder.

But the death of the Empress Elizabeth put an end to all these vain projects. Her successor, Peter III., had long viewed with pleasure the league of Russia against Frederic, for whom he had conceived a great admiration, and his first act on coming to the throne was to make peace with him. This entirely frustrated the designs of the allies, as well as of Augustus, whom Peter treated with the greatest contempt, and even refused to give his envoys an audience.

The emperor and Frederic formed three resolutions with regard to Poland. The first was, that the successor of Augustus should be a Pole. This determination owed its origin to the intrigues of the Czartoryskis. The second, to protect the dissidents; and the third, that Russia should resume the possession of Courland.

Peter's wife, Catharine, adopted nearly the same line of policy as her husband, but with very different motives. Her object was to raise her lover, Poniatowski, to the throne. This young count was the fourth son of Poniatowski, the brother-in-law of the Czartoryskis, who has already come under our notice. Fortune marked him for one of her favourites from his very cradle. At the time of his birth an Italian adventurer, of the name of Fornica, lived in his father's house in the capacity of surgeon; he was at the same time a pretended astrologer and alchemist, and most probably assumed those titles to ingratiate the favour of his protector, whose character was strongly tinged with superstition. Aware of the ambitious views of the family, he predicted that the new-born child would wear a crown; and the parents readily believed what their hopes made possible, and their influence probable. They gave the boy the ominous and regal name Stanislas Augustus. The countess, at the same time, ambitious from pride and credulous from a romantic disposition, applied herself with great care to tram up this young scion

of royalty. She made him swear to abjure the seductions of love and pleasure till he was thirty years old, that nothing might turn his eyes from the crown which she pointed out to him.

But young Poniatowski was not born to tread the thorny road of ambition; he was naturally a voluptuary; and while his mother lectured him on the sciences of war and politics, he hummed over to himself the licentious songs of the French poets, who were his favourite authors.* He possessed a showy, superficial knowledge of literature, and had some tact in conversation, both in public and private; but, fortunately for Poniatowski, it was not his mind that was to lead him to the high elevation he aimed at.

This second-rate intellect was set in a person of the first order of beauty: there was an air of superiority in his symmetrical but characteristic countenance, and his figure, without being majestic from its height or strength, was marked with that more commanding and intrinsic majesty of carriage which seems to proceed from gigantic feelings, instead of large bones and rigid muscles.

But, after all, Poniatowski was one of those men who could be *almost* any thing, and are absolutely nothing; he was one of those characters which Nature draws out in a neutral-tint of light and shade, ready to take every colour, but which she sends into the world without any. He had pride, but it was not pride of intellect, rank, or spirit; ambition, but it was a mere craving after he knew not what, which was as much satiated by fulsome approval of a doggerel sonnet as the proudest success of important schemes; a kind of philanthropy, but it was a mere love of his species, and did not assume either of those definite characters, patriotism, friendship, or charity; warmth of heart, which, as it was not associated

* Rulhière.

with the affections and feelings of any particular object, had no gratification but sensual passion.

Such was the state of Poniatowski's mind and character when Sir Charles Williams, the English ambassador, arrived at Warsaw. Some similarity of feeling and disposition led to an acquaintance between these two young men, which grew into firm friendship, and, as may be supposed, did not much tend to renovate the youthful and pliant Pole's principles. Under the care of this dissolute friend, Poniatowski took a butterfly-tour through foreign countries, sipping, as he skimmed along, only the froth of society. He made a short sojourn at Paris, that city of gayety, so congenial to his habits, while Williams proceeded to discharge his diplomatic duties in England. The young Pole was quite intoxicated with the pleasures of the French capital; gamed, intrigued, made love, and swore eternal affection to every woman he met. So unguarded was he, and so favourably were his addresses received, that thirty ladies are said to have encountered each other, one day, in his country-house, to lay claim to their gay deceiver. His finances could not bear the extravagant drafts which his pleasures and gaming drew upon them; so that he was involved in debt, and the harpies of the law laid their unhallowed hands on the embryo king. From this dilemma he was delivered by one of his female friends,* and then made the best of his way to England to rejoin Williams. The only fruits of his visit to Paris were an experience in the wiles of captivating the female heart, and an affectation of kingly deportment, which he studied in Louis XV. The former of these acquirements, as will be seen, gained him the throne, and the latter taught him how to fill it.

Williams was now appointed ambassador to Pe-

* It was Madame Geoffrin, wife of a rich glass manufacturer, to whom Poniatowski was indebted for this kindness.

tersburg, and the Czartoryskis gladly seized his offer to take Poniatowski to Russia as his secretary. The wily diplomatist threw his young friend in the way of Catharine, who was then only grand-dutchess, and whose heart was opened to any attachment by the contempt she had for her husband Peter. Williams contrived to let them have a private interview in the English consul's house, where Catharine went on foot, and alone, in a Russian winter's night.* Poniatowski was young,† handsome, and fascinating, well experienced in the arts of winning woman's affections, and bold enough to seize the decisive moment of victory. What a different language did love now speak to that which Catharine had been accustomed to hear! Instead of the coarse jests of a Russian boor, she now listened to the witty and voluptuous seductions of French elegance and if the former could find the way to her heart, what resistance was to be now expected? The Pole's blandishments this night falsified the dogma that love "has no great influence on the sum of life,"‡ for while they won a woman's affections, they gained a crown which contained within its circumference the destinies of millions, and the sway of Poland.

When the English ambassador was obliged to leave Petersburg, Poniatowski contrived to prolong his stay, by obtaining a diplomatic commission in the service of Augustus. The French minister, Count Broglie, on hearing that this young emissary of the Czartoryskis was nominated ambassador from the Polish court, said to Brühl, "This complaisance

* The grand-duke one night detected Poniatowski entering Catharine's palace, but fearful of compromising the interest of the court by doing violence to a foreign minister, and being at the same time not the most sensitive of husbands, satisfied himself with committing the intruder into custody. Catharine did not hesitate to confront her injured husband; the couple made an amicable arrangement, the lover was liberated, and Catharine promised to give her husband's mistress an annual pension.—See Rulhière's "Anecdotes sur la Russie."

† Only twenty-three.

‡ Johnson.

will cost the house of Saxony the throne." This was one of those safe calculations of cause and effect which enable the thinking mind to speak with the true spirit of prophecy. Nor did Poniatowski deviate from the line of conduct which was anticipated; for so indefatigably did he follow up the advantage he had gained over Catharine's heart, that shortly after this time she introduced her lover to some young Poles, with whom she was supping, as their future king. With so little circumspection was the love affair carried on, that even the grand-duke, regardless as he was of his wife, and whose treatment, in fact, had emancipated her from all ties to him, except those which "the church links withal," began to think it was time to open his eyes, and exclaim "*non omnibus dormio!*" The grand-chancellor, too, Bestucheff, who was one of Catharine's confidants, was disgraced about this time, and the loss of his protection further exposed Poniatowski to animadversion. For some months the lovers' embraces were embittered by the tears of anticipated separation,—every meeting was ended with lingering looks of regret.

"And though they hope and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last."

At length the dreaded day arrived; the Polish minister recalled his emissary, and in vain Catharine and her train supplicated the empress on their knees and with tears; Poniatowski was sent to Poland to lament over his blighted hopes, and his mistress was left to weep till she could find a new gallant to console with her. The young count carried back with him a letter to his father from the grand-dutchess, containing these words: "Charles XII. distinguished your merit; I shall know how to distinguish your son's, and raise him, perhaps, above Charles XII. himself." The old man treasured up this epistle, and always carried the precious document in his bosom.

At the same time Catharine cherished an implacable animosity against the Saxon Prince Charles, and the French and Austrian ambassadors, who she fancied had been instrumental in Poniatowski's removal; and she did not fail, as the sequel of the history will show, to retaliate when she had the power.

All these circumstances tended to increase the Russian influence over the destinies of Poland. When even the proudest of the Polish nobles could so openly recognise the supremacy of their ambitious neighbour as to beg for the crown as a fief, that neighbour must have been conscientious indeed, and more so than any of the more civilized states of Europe, to disclaim the right thus admitted. Even Turkey now abandoned all resistance to the encroachments of Russia on this *devoted republic*, as it has been strangely designated. Mustapha was sultan, and having a taste for war, or rather for military gewgaws and shows, entertained a high opinion of Frederic the Great, and in defiance of the laws of Mahomet kept by him his portrait, which, even to the present day, is the only picture said to be ever admitted into the seraglio.

Nor did the Prussian king neglect to cherish and make use of this admiration; he wrote to the sultan, and descended to the fulsome flattery which even he could stoop to when it answered his purpose. "You ought to have been born three ages sooner," ran the letter; but the compliment was thrown away on Mustapha, who in vain consulted all his wise men about the meaning of it.* The sultan, however, gave Frederic the credit of intending to say something polite, and promised in return to enter into an amicable arrangement with Prussia, and consequently Russia, in token of which he made his troops set out to attack the Austrians.

But while Frederic's heart yet beat high with the

* Rulhière, vol. i. p. 320.

hope of his hated rival's ruin, by means of the overwhelming league he had formed against her, an unexpected event falsified all his calculations. In 1762 Catharine made the murdered body of her husband her footstool to the throne of Russia, and the death of Peter loosened the bonds of alliance with Prussia. These were tidings of great joy to Poland, which stood trembling between her armed and leagued neighbours, whose mutual jealousy was her only safeguard. But none of the Poles could have received the news more gladly than Poniatowski.

Count Brulh, who could so conveniently adapt himself to events, was the first to announce the affair to the young count. His messenger found him in bed, with a picture of the empress on both sides of him, one in the character of Bellona, and the other as Minerva. On hearing the tidings, Poniatowski leaped from the bed almost frantic with joy, and on his knees addressed Heaven and the pictures in turn. He was already on his flight to the arms of his mistress, but his uncles prudently detained him till they had ascertained the posture of affairs.

Catharine gave Poniatowski's impetuosity plenty of time to cool, for she did not send him a single message or line for more than a month. Rumour in the mean time explained this delay, but not at all to the young count's satisfaction; for she whispered that Orloff, a young Russian, who had been instrumental in raising the empress to the throne, had stepped into his place. At length the wished-for billet arrived, containing these words concerning her ambassador, "I send Keyserling to Poland with orders to make you, or your cousin Prince Adam Czartoryski, king." To counterbalance this, it contained mention of Orloff's services, which Poniatowski felt were praised far too warmly for mere gratitude. In the midst of this alternation of hope and fear, joy and perplexity, we will leave the disappointed count weeping, as was his ridiculous custom to do, and proceed to inquire

what was the result experienced by the rest of the Poles on this change in the dynasty of the Russian empire.

Catharine immediately lowered the towering hopes of Frederic, by countermanding her troops, and thus blighted an undertaking which might have been of momentous import to the Polish state. She did not forget her resentment against Prince Charles, Duke of Courland, and informed Augustus, very coolly, that he must depose him. Opposition was in vain, and after some useless demur the order was obeyed, and Biron, the former Russian duke, reinstated. This compliance was exacted by the dread of 15,000 Russians in Courland, and 2000, whose stay had been prolonged ever since the late war, at Graudentz, a strong town in the palatinate of Culm. This treatment of his son was a heavy blow to Augustus; Poland had now no more charms for him, for the small remnant of power which Russia left him was wrested from him by the contending factions. Fortunately, peace now restored to him Saxony, and an asylum from the troubles and vexations of his kingdom, nor did he delay long to avail himself of it.

But while Augustus was so ready to abandon his throne, there was another who was longing, and literally crying for it. Poniatowski soon found that no competition was to be feared from Adam Czartoryski, who was too modest to aspire to an honour which his father had aimed at and could not attain; and he then urged him the more earnestly and with the greater show of sincerity to accept the offer of the empress. But there are moments when the heart will make itself heard in spite of the wildest hypocrite, and in these the count was heard to say, "We must not make fortunes for others which we may make for ourselves."

The ambassador whom Catharine sent to Warsaw to further her former lover's views was Count Keyserling, an old diplomatist, who had grown gray in

intrigues and villany. He had been originally a professor in the university of Königsberg, and during one of his missions to Poland had seen Poniatowski when a child, and amused himself with giving him instructions in Latin; in remembrance of which, he now still called him his son and pupil.

Poniatowski and the Czartoryskis, however, met with opposition; but this, in fact, only served to advance their interest, as it became a pretext for the direct interference of Russia. Prince Radziwill was their mortal enemy, and besides being the richest and most powerful noble in the kingdom, was, in spite of them, appointed Palatine of Wilna, the most important officer in Lithuania. He had even a regular army at his service, which was furnished with artillery. With this equipage he went to Wilna to assume the authority of his office, which he proceeded to exercise in investigating the elections of deputies in direct opposition to the intrigues of the Czartoryskis.

This party, however, backed as they were by the Russian interest, and who had, besides, at their disposal the treasure and army of Lithuania, assembled to check their rival's intention. But they were not sufficiently strong to awe Radziwill, who, although his opponents had confederated and sent for Russian assistance, persevered in his object. Catharine was not yet firmly seated on her throne, and was obliged to concede something to the will of her ministers; and she did not at first dare to send troops to Poland with the avowed purpose of aiding a faction.

She therefore pretended that they were only to march through Lithuania, on their route from Courland to the Ukraine. Even this, without permission, was an aggression; but the Poles had too long degraded themselves in the scale of nations to be able much to resent the insult. Her emissaries privately threatened the Radziwillians, and she more than hinted to the king by letter that she must interfere if he continued to favour that party.

Eight thousand Russians, who announced themselves only as a vanguard of a larger body, entered Lithuania and encamped near Wilna. But the Poles, who always reserve their energies for the last emergency, so far from being daunted by this army, exclaimed against the villany of Poniatowski and his party, who were ready to sell their country to its enemies. "Poland," said they, "will have no arbiter but God!" Prince Radziwill, with an increased army, kept watch on the movements of the traitors and their Russian allies, being determined to exterminate them on the first appearance of violence. The old but excellent Branicki and his band of patriots supported the prince with heart and soul; and Mokranowski was sent to the Russian ambassador, Keyserling, to demand an explanation of his mistress's conduct.

Keyserling felt that he must temporize, and having in vain tempted the noble envoy with bribes, assured him that Catharine had no inimical design, and that the troops would be soon withdrawn. Frederic of Prussia was rather alarmed at the movement of the Russians; and the czar of the Crimea, learning that they were approaching the frontiers, where he was encamped, sent their general this message: "If you touch a single Polish hut, in five days I will come to breakfast with you with a hundred thousand Tartars." Afraid of these consequences, Catharine ordered her troops to leave Lithuania.

Poniatowski wept with rage at seeing his traitorous designs on his country again frustrated. He was present on the day when Branicki, his brother-in-law, was leaving Warsaw after the negotiation with Keyserling; and the old man, espying him, made him get into his carriage, and began to reason with him, in hopes of kindling some sparks of patriotism in his breast. "Your ambition," said the venerable monitor, "misleads you; it is conducting you to slavery, and perhaps your greatest success will only serve to mark

the epoch of the entire destruction of your country." Poniatowski answered only with tears. The grand-general, inquiring how he was to interpret them, and receiving no answer but fresh tears and muttered invectives against the house of Saxony, stopped his carriage for his degenerate relative to alight, drove on, and never spoke to him again.

Fortune, however, was not so stern towards the count as his brother had been; for she now drew from her wheel a prize for him, which soon proved to be nothing less than the crown he sighed for. The news arrived that Augustus was dead, and Poniatowski breathed freely again. This event happened on the 5th of October, 1763. He was then in his sixty-seventh year, and had reigned thirty. This monarch was one of those men who have nothing distinct from their species, merely *nati consumere fruges*. His character is too easily read to require any commentary. These "stupidly good" princes are more fatal to states in dangerous times than despots themselves; for the latter, in such cases, are not allowed time to misemploy their talents or their cunning. "Augustus," says Solignac,* "had, like his father, all the virtues of peace, but very little military talent; the crown of Poland was the cause of misfortune to both." The worthy secretary of Stanislas seems to have overtaxed his candour in the former clause of this sentence; the combination of "all the virtues of peace" would have made a much greater man than Poland has been fortunate enough to possess for a king.

This reign was more propitious to the cause of learning than the preceding. Among the followers of Stanislas to France were the Bishops Zaluski, and the Abbé Konarski, who brought back to Poland an

* Histoire de Pologne, vol. vi. Solignac was secretary to Stanislas Leszczynski, and accompanied him to Lorraine. His history is carried down to 1773, but we cannot give it much credit for accuracy, liberality, or impartiality. It is of some use, however, as a check on the Polish historians.

ardent enthusiasm for studious pursuits, and a wish to elevate their national literature from its debasement. Zaluski, Bishop of Kiow, traversed almost all the countries of the Continent in quest of books and manuscripts, devoting the whole of his revenues and property to this noble purpose. After forming a princely collection of more than 200,000 volumes, he made a present of it to the public.

The exertions of Konarski were not less praiseworthy. He was of the society of the Piarists, an order which had been introduced into Poland in 1642, on precisely opposite principles to the Jesuits. He established a college at Warsaw (*Collegium Nobilium Scholarum Piarum*) at his own expense. His publications on learning, politics, and religion were written in the boldest spirit of reform; he introduced the legitimate drama, and freed education from the conventual shackles of the Jesuits. His exertions were at first "as the small pebble" that "stirs the peaceful lake," but they soon spread wider and wider throughout Poland; and all the glorious attempts since made at enlightened reform in literature and policy, may be said to have owed their existence to him.

CHAPTER VII.

Forced Election of Stanislas Poniatowski—Bold Resistance of Mokronowski—Confederation—The Confederates offer the Crown to Henry, Brother of Frederic the Great—Coronation of Stanislas—Anecdote of Stanislas—Claims of the Dissidents; supported by Russia; rejected by the Diet—Confederacy of the Dissidents—Confederacy of the Constitutionalists—Repnin's Treachery—Polish Bishops banished to Siberia—Dissidents confirmed in their Rights—Confederacy of Bar—Attempt to seize Repnin—Bar taken by the Russians—Rupture between Russia and Turkey—Defeat of the Turks—State of the Confederates—The Confederates transfer their Council to Eperies—Visited by Joseph II.

Nothing perhaps awakens more passions, bad and good, than competition, and few things have been sought with more eagerness than a crown. In addition to the stimulus which Poniatowski felt in common with other aspirants to the Polish diadem, his long expectations, which must have almost grown into a claim in his own mind, spurred him on to the contest. His cousin, whose name Catharine had put as a candidate with his, had entirely abandoned the field, and even sent his written determination to the empress to that purport. But the deceitful count, either from the idea of adding effect to his situation, or in conformity with his habit of hypocrisy, affected the greatest sensibility at the thought of the important charge he was about to take on himself, and this too at the very time when he was forging new chains for his country. "I foresee," said he, "that I shall have a difficult reign; I shall find only the thorns while I leave to others the flowers. Perhaps, like Charles I. of England, I shall suffer a long imprisonment." The amusements which this sentimentalist marked out for himself to while away the tedium of this prophesied confinement, were the care of his toilet, the study of his curls, and the folds of his cravat,

The Poles in general, or at least all those who did not expect any advantage from the enslavement of their country, would not allow themselves to imagine that Poniatowski, one of Catharine's kept men, could ever wear the Polish crown; and wished their hero Branicki to accept it, in full confidence that he would restore its tarnished lustre. But although age had not chilled Branicki's patriotism, it had curbed his spirit of enterprise, and he felt that even were he elected he should be king only of half his people.

Count Oginski, who had married Michael Czartoryski's daughter, was another and powerful rival to Poniatowski. He went to Petersburg in the hope of subverting his relative's interest with Catharine, and even Orloff exclaimed in full court when he saw him, "This is the man who ought to be king, and not a poor player like Poniatowski." But the empress was resolute, and when she was told one day that her lover's grandfather had been a dependant of the Sapiehas, she coloured at the word, but exclaimed imperiously, "Had he been so himself, I wish him to be king, and he shall be!"

Nor did Catharine confine herself to mere protestations; she kept 60,000 troops on the frontiers ready to enforce her will, and sent Prince Repnin to Warsaw to urge on the tardy Keyserling. He was a fit agent for such a mistress and such a mission. He said, before his departure, that "his sovereign should give Poland whatever king she thought fit, the meanest gentleman, Polish or foreign; and that no power on earth could hinder her." He had been one of Poniatowski's boon companions at Petersburg, and felt a pleasure in renewing his acquaintance. He brought him 100,000 ducats, and assured him of further support.

Frederic wished to conciliate Catharine; he seemed to enter into all her views, and signed a treaty to prevent all change in the Polish government, and to confer the crown on a Piast. He also sent her

lover the riband of the order of the Black Eagle, as a testimony of his favour. Forty thousand Prussians were on the frontiers, and ten thousand Russians were on their march to Warsaw.

Branicki and Radziwill were still firm to their duty: the latter arrived at Warsaw with a considerable number of troops, which, with the other forces of the republicans, amounted to 3000 men.

On the 7th of May, 1764, which was the stated time for opening the diet of election, the Russians were drawn up without the city, and guarded all the avenues. Poniatowski was strongly guarded, and the whole of the senate-house was filled with soldiers. But only eight senators out of fifty appeared; and Malachowski, whose duty it was to open the session, as marshal of the last diet, did not for some time make his appearance. Mokranowski was engaged during this interval in registering, in the very building which was invested by his enemies, a manifesto against the legality of the diet, held under the awe of foreign arms.

When this was done, Mokranowski entered the house, leading the old marshal, who held his staff reversed, which was a sign that the diet was not yet opened. Mokranowski exclaimed, with a high voice, "Since the Russian troops hem us in, I suspend the authority of the diet." Immediately, the host of soldiers who were present drew their swords, and rushed at the bold patriot. This first outrage was prevented; and Mokranowski, sheathing his sword, which he had drawn in his defence, and looking round at the deputies, who wore cockades of the Czartoryski family colours, said to them, "What, gentlemen, are you deputies of your country, and assume the livery of a family?"

The old marshal then spoke: "Gentlemen, since liberty no longer exists among us, I carry away this staff, and I will never raise it till the public is delivered from her troubles." Mokranowski supported

the old man, and again drew on himself the vengeance of the villanous soldiers. "Strike," shouted he, crossing his arms, "strike, I shall die free, and in the cause of liberty!" This signal determination arrested the arms raised against him, and his enemies feared to render their cause obnoxious by the massacre of such a justly respected patriot. They turned to the marshal, and ordered him to resign the staff; but he was made of equally impenetrable stuff as his coadjutor. "You may cut off my hand," he said, "or take my life; but I am marshal, elected by a free people, and I can only be deposed by a free people. I shall retire." This venerable man was eighty years old. They surrounded him, and opposed his departure; but Mokranowski, perceiving their violence, cried out, "Gentlemen, respect this old man; let him go out! If you must have a victim, here am I:—respect age and virtue!" At the same time he repelled the attacks on him; and the crowd reached the door, which the chiefs of the opposite party ordered to be opened, being afraid of the consequences.

The determined conduct of these two patriots deprived the faction of even a semblance of constitutional sanction of their lawless proceedings; but Poniatowski, who was now growing more experienced in the arts of despotism, prolonged the diet, and ordered the deputies to commence the election of a marshal as if no protest had been made. Prince Adam Czartoryski was chosen, and this junto,* consisting scarcely of eighty members, instead of about 300, with self-constituted authority, and in defiance of every principle of law, justice, or patriotism, commenced a proscription of all the leading constitutionalists.

The patriots, finding that force was to be the

* It is remarked by Solignac, that most of the nobles present at this diet were in the German costume; whereas if this had been the case at any other time they would have been massacred.—Hist. vol. vi.

arbiter, left Warsaw in two bodies ; one, under the grand-general, proceeded to attempt a confederation in Poland, and the other, under Radziwill, to enter Lithuania for the same purpose. When the diet heard this, they deprived the grand-general of his office, and intrusted it to Augustus Czartoryski, who had orders to send against him all the troops, foreign or native, which he could collect. The same instructions were issued with regard to Radziwill.

The small body of men under Branicki decreased daily, and they were obliged to take refuge on the borders of Hungary. Radziwill on his road encountered a detachment of Russians and gave battle. His wife and sister, both young and beautiful, accompanied him. Such a cause, and such an emergency, have before now nerved the delicate female to tread the field of warfare, and in the present instance these fragile, lovely creatures were to be seen on horseback, with sabres in their hands, animating their brothers in arms to revenge their betrayed country. Among the Poles there was one individual who particularly attracted their notice by his hardihood and beauty, and they honoured him with their personal approbation. He was a poor and obscure gentleman, named Moraski ; but one of Radziwill's sisters had conceived such an admiration of him, which his beauty had fostered into love, that within eight days after the fight she conferred on him her hand, dowered with an immense fortune. Hireling barbarians could not at first resist enthusiasm like this, and some hundreds of them were left on the field. But strong as patriotism is, it is not irresistible ; and traitors' arms are of the same metal and temper as those wielded by the warmest lovers of their country ; Radziwill was obliged to fly, and sought refuge in Turkey.

The constitutionalists now turned to Prussia as a last resource, and Mokranowski flew to Berlin to have a conference with Frederic. He pointed out to him the gross violation which the Russians had made of

their constitution, and the danger of their encroachments. Frederic pretended that the republicans had attempted to make the crown hereditary in the house of Saxony. "Besides," said he, "you are the weakest; you must submit." The Pole replied, "Your majesty did not set us such an example; you resisted, single-handed, all Europe." "Without a favourable juncture," observed the king, "I should have been undone." "One presents itself," returned Mokranowski; "and your majesty's talents have directed fortune's junctures." Frederic observed that they were accustomed to receive their kings from Russia. "She has only given us one, and we wish no more from her. But will your majesty never appear except as a secondary character among us?—Assume the part that becomes us: give us a king; give us your brother, Prince Henry." "He will not turn Catholic." "At least, sire, preserve our liberty." The king assured Mokranowski that he had no other intention, and turning the conversation on the Poles, attempted to persuade him to enter his service, so justly did he appreciate merit. This offer was declined, and they parted.

The field was now entirely clear for Poniatowski, and the Russians allowed no time for new opposition. Keyserling, the ambassador, was enlisted in the count's service by more than one motive. The degenerate Pole threw himself at his feet, in tears, and swore that he would never exert his regal authority but according to his directions, and that under the name of Poniatowski Keyserling would rule. On the 7th of September, 1764, barely 4000 nobles, instead of the usual number of 80,000, assembled in the field of election, and the count beheld the consummation of his wishes.

No prince, says Rulhière, ever ascended the throne under more perplexing and unfortunate circumstances than Stanislas Augustus. To this we may add, none was ever less qualified to remedy them, and few have

been afflicted with them more deservedly. He had no longer the support of Catharine; her jealousy had been roused by rumours of his gallantries, and her good sense most probably saw through the showy disguise of his imbecility, and began to be ashamed of her former admiration. With so little satisfaction did she receive the news of his election from Count Oginski, that she said, coolly, "I congratulate you on it," and withdrew. The majority of the Poles submitted unwillingly, and even those who had been most earnest in his election must have regarded the traitorous intrigue, now it was divested of its bustle and excitation, in its natural deformity.

The coronation took place on the 25th of November, and, as if to observe a consistent opposition to the laws, it was performed at Warsaw, instead of Cracow.* Stanislas, ashamed of the Polish costume, which he would in fact have only disgraced, refused to sacrifice his long black curls to appear with his head cropped, as was customary, dressed himself in a theatrical style with a helmet, and presented himself in this garb to receive the sacred unction, amid the sneers of his subjects.

The Czartoryskis availed themselves of the opportunity offered by the coronation-diet to reform the laws, so as to render the constitution virtually monarchical.† The change was insidious, but time rendered it too apparent. This same assembly decreed two statues, one to Augustus, the other to Michael Czartoryski. On the same night placards were posted in different parts of the city with this merited sarcasm:

"Erect two gibbets; that is their fit monument."

Stanislas bore his honours as might be expected;

* Solignac.

† Justice, however, obliges us to mention that many of the changes were really beneficial, such as those relating to the coinage, and weights and measures. Whether the tariff, which was now for the first time introduced into Poland, deserves the same character, is at least a questionable point.

frivolity, show, and extravagance now exhibited themselves under royal protection. He pretended to turn his attention to military matters, and raised several regiments; but he ordered the cadets to wear such immense helmets and such high plumes, that a gust of wind blew down his young army. The count, however, sometimes made his chameleon character assume the show of a stern moralist on showy follies and extravagance, and on this account we can readily believe an anecdote told by Solignac.* He one day went to pay the voyvode of Kiow a visit, and saw among the company a nobleman very conspicuous by the sumptuousness and costliness of his dress. The king had the impertinence to ask him why he was decked out so finely; and was answered that it was a token of respect to his majesty. "You are mistaken," said Stanislas, with disgusting affectation, "a Pole ought to be distinguished only by courage and talent."

Even now Stanislas Augustus was but a viceroy of Russia. The ambassador Repnin remained at Warsaw, boasting that "it was he who had put the crown on his head," and ready to make him feel that it was he also who kept it on. More than 20,000 Russian troops were scattered over the kingdom, and though Branicki and his party had been allowed to return to Poland, and did not offer any resistance to the existing authority, they could not actively support it. The king had also destroyed the slight check of jealousy which Frederic might have presented to the encroaching influence of Russia, in displeasing that monarch by proposals to Catharine to enter into an alliance with Austria, Prussia's mortal enemy. Stanislas Augustus did this from the views he had of forming a matrimonial alliance with an archduchess. Frederic discovered the plot, and exclaimed, with a burst of rage, "I will break his head with his crown!"

* Histoire de Pologne, vol. vi.

All parties regarded the approaching diet of 1766 as the crisis which was to determine their fate. The dissidents looked forward to it for the restitution of their privileges under the protection of Catharine. Poland, formed by the junction of states professing different religions, was naturally tolerant, but still the Roman Catholic was predominant. The next powerful sect, the Greek church, was united to the papists in the enjoyment of offices and privileges. Those properly called dissidents, such as the Lutherans and Calvinists, were chiefly of the lower orders in the towns of Polish Prussia, and numbered but very few, and those the poorer nobles, in their sect. The Catholics have always been "exclusives;" and, as we have already seen, on the accession of Augustus III. they deprived the dissidents, that is, the few nobles who still lingered in that sect, of all personal share in the government. They had still the privileges of holding military offices, and the right of election, but could not be deputies themselves. At the same time, when the diet decreed these disabilities, they declared those dissidents guilty of high-treason who implored the protection of foreign powers. These Protestants had presented a petition to the diet of election that they might be reinstated in their former rights; but the bigoted Catholics had treated the request with contempt, torn the paper in pieces, and even deprived the dissidents of the right of holding offices.* They renewed the application at the coronation-diet, but with the same want of success. In imitation, therefore, of the other party, they determined to sacrifice the general good, which in fact was now severed from theirs, to particular interest, and obtain from Russian interference what their own nation refused them. The battle of hostile creeds always

* We use nearly the same words as a Catholic historian. Even he terms such outrageous zeal "fanaticism."—See Rulhière, tom. II p. 218 and 270.

elicits the same bad passions ; bigotry, jealousy, and revenge are ever the three furies, ready to kindle the flame of religious discord. Catharine listened to their memorial, and informed the Polish ambassador that their demands must be granted, adding, "I forewarn you if you do not yield to me what I now request, my demands shall be without bounds."* Repnin also presented a memorial to the diet, stating, that "his mistress wished to re-establish the dissidents, whether Greeks, Lutherans, or Calvinists, in all their former privileges ; and that if she met with any opposition which resisted persuasion, she should be obliged to employ force, and that she was resolved upon it." The following declarations sound strangely in a Russian despot's mouth. "It would be shutting one's eyes to proofs, not to admit, as a principle, that the constant refusal to listen to their representations, and to do justice to their grievances, must necessarily produce the effect of freeing them from their ties to an association in whose advantages they would no longer participate ; and that, restored fully to the condition of the community of freemen, they will be authorized, without any law, divine or human, forbidding such a step in their case, to choose among their neighbours judges between them and their equals, and to avail themselves of their alliance if they cannot in any other way defend themselves from persecution."† The Russians, too, had sufficient forces at hand to support their authority ; more than 20,000 were still in Poland, and there were 40,000 on the frontiers.

Stanislas Augustus had further weakened his authority by alienating from himself the support of his uncles ; so that the deputies for the approaching diet were divided into two separate parties. Eight

* An official defence of the cause of the dissidents was published at Petersburg in Dec. 1766.—See "Exposition des Droits des Dissidents."

† See "Exposition des Droits des Dissidents," to which this "Declaration" is appended.

only were of neither faction, but conscientious patriots; these were, Malachowski, who has before come under our eyes in such an honourable point of view, his son, Count Wielhorski, Count Czazcki, and four Prussian deputies.

In this dilemma the king found himself obliged to conciliate his uncles, and the two parties were thus united in determined opposition to all concession to the dissidents. In pursuance of the advice of his new counsellor, Stanislas Augustus convoked the bishops, and other senators who might be expected to be warmest against the Protestants, and nearly all pledged their oaths to support him in his resistance. Thus reassured, he told the Russian ambassador, "that he was determined to defend his holy religion."

The diet opened on the 6th of October, and after the *pacta conventa* were read, according to custom, before the united bodies of senators and deputies, that they might protest against any infringement which might have been made, Soltyk, the patriotic bishop of Cracow, remarked that the first article was concerning the defence of the established religion, and he felt himself bound to complain of the dissidents for having sought the aid of foreign powers, contrary to the laws. He then moved that they should never grant them any concessions, but confirm the penal statute. The Poles, who had been so disunited in their country's cause, rose now with one heart and voice at the call of intolerance, and the diet re-echoed the sentiments of the bishop with a general shout of acclamation. But Poniatowski's courage began to fail at the thought of such open defiance to Russia, and he deferred this subject for a future day. This meeting, however, carried one good resolution; namely, that the elections in the dietines should be decided by plurality of suffrages, instead of unanimous acclamation, which had been the cause of great confusion and delay.

The Russian ambassador, in the mean time, was

making a counterplot. He now addressed himself to the constitutionalists, and all the former opponents of Poniatowski. He told them that now was the time to escape from the yoke that had been forced on them. The Radziwillians and the partisans of Saxony also listened to his temptations. One of Russia's most active agents was Podoski, a man admirably suited to carry on such an intrigue. Although an ecclesiastic, and educated for the church from his infancy, he appeared at Warsaw as an advocate of the dissidents. The reason of this seeming anomaly was a passion he had long felt for a Lutheran widow. The most upright patriots fell into his snares; to all remonstrances from the court party they answered, that their object was to recover their lost liberty, and overthrow a hated dynasty, and that it was allowable to make even Russians conduce to this end.

The king still further thinned the ranks of his partisans by attempting to carry a law to make all motions in the diet concerning the military forces and taxes carried by a plurality instead of a unanimity of votes. He expected that this would enable him to obtain some power over the diet, since he could ensure a majority although he could not stop every patriot's mouth. This attempted innovation, however salutary it might have eventually proved, alarmed the deputies, and they received the proposal with shouts of indignation. Many of those who had been most devoted to the king but a few moments before, now showed themselves his adversaries, the more openly as they had to regain the confidence of the new party they then adopted.*

Catharine only increased her demands in favour of the dissidents, and 40,000 Russians entered Poland. The dissidents confederated at Thorn, on the 20th of March, 1767; but notwithstanding old men and

* Rulhière.

even children were pressed into the service, the list of confederates contained the names of only 573 gentlemen of the Lutheran or Calvinistic profession; artisans and peasants composed the majority.* This was the party which the Russians represented as a great portion of the nation, and which the Poles magnified into an enemy so formidable as to require such determined resistance. But still the malecontents would not make common cause with these dissidents, although they disowned all allegiance to the king.

Repnin's agent, Podoski, however, planned a confederation of the constitutionalists. He held out to them the hope of crushing the Czartoryskis, preserving the constitution from the encroachments of Poniatowski, and promised in Repnin's name that he should be deposed. All the old patriots rallied at the promise, and more than 60,000 nobles signed their names to the confederacy. They were in suspense on whom to confer the office of marshal; but Catharine anticipated their wishes, and ordered them to choose the patriot prince Radziwill, whom they accordingly sent for. He reached Wilna the capital of his province on the 3d of June, and was reinstated in all his former authority and possessions. The marshals of 178 particular confederations met at Radom, a town fifteen miles from Warsaw.

Repnin showed the king the list of confederates,

* This is the number stated by Rulhière, but the printed list of confederates contains only 304.

The following are the grievances complained of in the act of confederation: prohibition of public worship, exclusion from offices, corporations, and incapacity of being witnesses in law-courts, &c.

A deputy duly elected, named Pietrowski, was expelled disgracefully from the diet of 1718, only for being a dissident. Many were accused of blasphemy, their property was confiscated, and they were obliged to escape from the kingdom. One of them, of the name of Unruk, having accidentally lost his portfolio containing religious extracts from different authors, was accused of blasphemy, and sentenced to lose his head. The tragedy at Thorn was too bloody to have been forgotten. The act concludes by calling for the protection of Russia, Sweden, Great Britain Denmark, and Prussia.—*Goltz. Starosta of Tuchel Marshal.*

and said to him, exultingly, "You see I am your master; you can retain your crown only by submission." The king now began to make some concessions, and the Russian was less decided about his dethronement.

The confederates were now made to feel their folly in trusting to Russian faith. A detachment of Catharine's troops encamped near Radom, and a Russian colonel, who accompanied Radziwill, being desired to withdraw, produced an order from his ambassador to be present at all deliberations of the confederates. He also pulled out a list of conditions, which the empress required to be unanimously agreed to. They were surprised to find, that besides ensuring the privileges of the dissidents, they required protestations of fidelity to the king, and an acknowledgment of Catharine's right of interference. The high and threatening tone of the colonel immediately disclosed to them the snare they had been decoyed into, and they wished to abjure the confederacy and disperse. Six marshals only, out of 178, were willing to submit, and the Russian, under pretext of giving them guards of honour, kept them in custody till he could receive further instructions from Repnin. The next day he drew up a battery in front of the town-hall, where the Polish nobles were assembled, and while his men stood to their guns, with lighted matches, he ordered the marshals to sign the manifesto. Podoski, who had just arrived from Warsaw, where Repnin had ensured him the archiepiscopal see, which was then vacated, was the first to sign. The marshals then affixed their names also, but with written reservations, which, in fact, annulled the meaning. Radziwill was declared marshal, and the confederates, entirely at the mercy of the Russians, remained in suspense to see the result.

The king's resolution entirely forsook him, and he submitted to Repnin at discretion. All parties

were now in Russia's power; Radziwill was kept guarded, and the ambassador was sole despot. He overruled the dietines in the election of deputies for a diet, and obliged most of them to sign a paper drawn up in these words; "I subscribe and pledge myself to Prince Repnin, ambassador plenipotentiary of her majesty the empress of all the Russias; and promise him that I will have no connexion or correspondence, that I will not even converse with any senator, minister, or deputy, with any ambassador or other foreign minister, or with any one whatever, whose sentiments are contrary to the projects proposed by the said ambassador, to be received and passed into a law in the diet; moreover, I promise him that I will not introduce to the diet any thing of all that has been enjoined and recommended in my instructions from the nobles of my district; and that, in a word, I will not oppose in any way the will of this ambassador; and in case of infraction of this engagement, I submit myself to the penalty of degradation of rank, confiscation of property, death, or any such like punishment it may please the said ambassador to inflict." Let this speak for itself.

The diet was opened on the 5th of October, 1767; and Repnin, having some few days before assured the bishops and those from whom he expected the greatest resistance, "that whosoever persisted in his obstinacy should repent it," expected implicit obedience. The first proposal was to establish a legislative commission, which would be entirely under the control of Russia. Some few patriots yet raised their voices against the gross oppression; the bishop of Cracow was among the foremost, and his example animated others. But Russian despotism is not accustomed to bear such opposition with impunity; and the ambassador determined to arrest the principal ringleaders of this patriotic sedition, and sent them to Siberia. These were the bishop of Cracow, the bishop of Kiow, the palatine of Cracow, and his

son. The king, who could not forgive the recent opposition he had experienced, even urged Replin to take this villanous step, particularly as it included the bishop of Cracow. On the 13th of October, while Soltyk, the bishop of Cracow, was supping with his friend, the marshal of the court, the Russian soldiers invested the house, and entered by three different ways. There was, however, still one unobserved passage by which he could escape and take refuge with the Prussian ambassador. This he disdained to do; and when the soldiers broke into the room where he was, he rose, and approaching the fireplace, threw into the flames the papers containing the secret plans of the patriots, which he always carried on his person. Then turning to the officer, he said to him, "Do you know me? Do you know that I am a sovereign prince,* a senator, and a priest? The Russian answered, his orders were to arrest him; and Soltyk followed him without the slightest emotion.

On the same night the other marked patriots shared the same fate. The venerable Zaliski, bishop of Kiow, was the restorer of learning in Poland, and had devoted an immense fortune, besides his revenue, to that purpose. By his own exertions he had formed a library of 200,000 volumes, and presented it to the public; but these services did not shield him from the despotism of Russia, and he was arrested with his brother patriots. They were conducted by a military guard with the greatest rigour and barbarity towards the frontier, nor were they allowed even the liberty of speaking. Catharine offered them their liberty if they would promise to desist from their opposition; this proposal was made to each separately in their dungeons, but rejected with disdain by every one. They were then transferred to Siberia, and the empress, wishing to erase even

* He was sovereign duke of Severia.

the memory of such patriotism, forbade all mention even of their names.

This scandalous violation of all national and individual right made a great sensation among the Poles, and the senate and deputies went in a body to the king to protest against it. They found this effigy of royalty seated quietly in his study, and amusing himself with sketching designs of pageants for the anniversary of his coronation. The only redress they could obtain from him was a message to the ambassador demanding an explanation of the late proceeding. Repnin answered that he was responsible only to his mistress; but that the prisoners had been guilty of disrespect to the empress, had endeavoured to attach suspicion to her intentions, and that they should not be set at liberty until the business of the diet was entirely settled. He also threatened to give the city up to pillage, if any further opposition was made to the proposal of a legislative commission, and that he would bring all malecontents to the scaffold.

At the next assembly of the confederated diet, Radziwill, as marshal of the confederacy, demanded if they agreed to the motion. Six voices only answered the first inquiry, three the second, and the third produced but one assent. Sixty commissioners, however, were appointed from the senate and deputies, with sovereign authority to decree whatever regulations seemed fit with regard to the religion, the laws, government, frontiers, and privileges of the nation. Their resolutions, proposed by the Russians, were to be brought before a regular diet, who were to have only the right of ratifying them without any discussion. None of these commissioners were to absent themselves without permission from Repnin; fourteen of them were a sufficient number to act; and thus a majority of eight persons had it in their power to decide the fate of the constitution.

Repnin was now uncontrolled dictator; he had the disposal of all offices; Poniatowski submitted quietly to his orders, and amused himself with witnessing the reviews and evolutions of the Russian troops—a worthy employment for such a king. He strove to win Repnin's favour by outdoing even his former agents in servile submission.

The conferences of the commissioners were held alternately at the ambassador's and the *prima's* houses. The affair of the dissidents was the first that was laid before them, and eight deputies of that sect were present as its advocates. The ministers of the foreign Protestant courts, England, Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark, were also admitted, to add weight to the cause. Repnin even here played the dictator, and checked all freedom of discussion.—This business was concluded on the 19th of November; the dissident nobility were then admitted to the same privileges as the Catholics, excepting that they were not eligible to the crown.

The commission next proceeded to the reform of the constitution. The *liberum veto* was re-established in all its absurd extent, and Poland was thus continued in its primitive impotence, incapable of aggregate exertion, and consequently at the mercy of its ambitious neighbour. Some few laudable reforms were mixed with these; the serfs were somewhat emancipated, the nobles being deprived of the right of life and death over them; and pecuniary compositions for crime, which still disgraced Poland, were now abolished.

The diet was then convened to ratify this new constitution. It was the most scanty assembly ever known; most of the senators were absent, and not a single Lithuanian deputy made his appearance. But even this small body was not unanimous in submission to Russian despotism,—one of the Prussian deputies protested against the forced diet and absconded. The diet was then virtually dissolved;

but although the Russians had themselves enacted the law of unanimity, they obliged the meeting to continue their session, and give their sanction to the new laws. The diet was dissolved on the 5th of March, and the confederation of Radom broken up.

But the spirit of Polish independence was not entirely annihilated; while the Russians were lording it so despotically at Warsaw, patriotic confederacies were secretly forming, and at the very time when the diet broke up, rumours reached Repnin's ear that they were already matured. The bishop of Kamiéniec, Krasinski, had entered into the spirit which actuated Soltyk in opposing the Russian subjugation, but habit and character made him adopt more wary expedients. He had been long known as an upright member of society, but had been always considered timid and undetermined. Constitutional weakness made him shudder at the report of a gun, and faint at the sight of a drawn sword; but a courageous spirit tenanted this feeble body, and even when his nerves trembled with fear, his mind laughed at the weakness, and remained undaunted. This temperament, however, made him always prefer the long course of wary perseverance which requires strength and determination of mind, to the dashing style of action which demands animal spirit and strong nerves.

While the bishop of Cracow was declaiming in the diet, he was negotiating with Turkey for aid against Russia. He obtained a promise of support from the sultan, provided Austria would remain neuter, and his next object was to ensure this proviso. But cautious as he was, his known connexion with Soltyk rendered him an object of Repnin's suspicion, and he would have been arrested at the same time as the other patriots had he not eloped. In the disguise of a physician he eluded the strictest vigilance, and was even called on to prescribe for one of the officers who was pursuing him. On another occasion, when in imminent danger of being discovered, he escaped,

concealed in an old chest, which served as a seat in a peasant's sledge. When he had arrived in a place of safety, where several of his attendants had orders to await him, he assumed the Prussian uniform, as well as the rest of his little troop; and in this disguise passed several Russian detachments, and even approached Warsaw, where, having made some communication with his party, he set out for Silesia on his route to Vienna to obtain the promise of neutrality.

But all the bishop's wary designs were frustrated by the impatience of one of his partisans: Joseph Pulawski, starosta of Warka, had been an emissary between the bishops of Kamiéniec and Cracow, and entered eagerly into their projects. He had long followed the profession of the law, and was chosen for one of the counsellors of the confederation of Radom. Repnin had a contemptible opinion of him, and made no demur at the choice; but the bishop of Cracow read his character better, took him into his confidence, and lodged him in his palace. From this moment he incurred the suspicion of Repnin, who, one day, even threatened to strike him, because he put on his cap in his presence, though he had done the same. This personal insult added fresh fuel to Pulawski's patriotic fire, and made him impatient to revenge himself on the enemies of himself, as well as his country. The bishop of Kamiéniec was so much too tardy for him, that he resolved to act for himself, and communicated his design to several of the nobles at Warsaw, from some of whom he obtained money, and from others orders for their domestic troops. Michael Krasinski, the bishop's brother, entered promptly into his schemes, and these two left Warsaw to traverse the country and raise confederates.

Pulawski was accompanied by three sons and his nephew. Notwithstanding their youth, he took them to one of his estates near Warsaw, communi-

cated his designs, and employed them as agents. Leopold, the capital of Polish Russia, was the first place proposed for a rendezvous ; but finding themselves too narrowly watched there, they fixed on Bar, a little town in the palatinate of Podolia, five leagues from Kamiéniec, and seven from the Turkish frontier. Eight gentlemen only formed the first assembly of the confederacy. Pulawski, his four relatives, Count Krasinski, and two other nobles, but more than three hundred had pledged their word. The 29th of February, 1768, was the memorable day which dates the commencement of this famous confederation. Their first step was to sign an act by which they renewed the confederation of Radom under the Marshal Radziwill. Their manifesto was a protest against the imposition of the Russian yoke.*

In a very short time the confederates mustered 8000 men ; they sent deputies to Turkey, Saxony, and Tartary, and now openly invited all to join them. But they found that they had reason to apprehend that they were premature ; the whole country was occupied by the enemy, and most of the nobles were without arms. When the bishop of Kamiéniec was informed of the confederation, he was so enraged at their rash impetuosity, that for a moment he wavered whether he should discountenance them ; but patriotism was predominant in his mind, and he hastened to Dresden, Vienna, and Versailles to sue for support.

Repnin was violently provoked at the proceedings of the patriots, and perhaps more so by a personal attack in their manifesto. He threatened to massacre them all without delay, but he was not bold enough to issue the order ; the Turks reminded him of his engagement to withdraw his troops, and he was obliged to devise some semblance of a just pre-

* See Appendix.

text for their retention. The king, afraid of his subjects, readily countenanced this design, and a small number of servile senators requested the Russians' protection against the rebels, as they termed them. The Russian troops, therefore, were set in motion against the confederates, and intercepted all their communications with Poland. Several skirmishes took place, always to the advantage of the patriots; Pulawski assembled his soldiers, and further animated them with harangues.

The senate, in the mean time, tried what could be done by negotiation, and Mokranowski was appointed emissary to the confederates. This patriot himself mistrusted the confederation, and feared it was but a badly concerted and useless rebellion. He, however, freely accepted the commission, wishing to ascertain the state of affairs with his own eyes, and trusting, that if he found them strong enough to deliver their country, he should be able to draw the king into the design; and if not, that he could save them from massacre by negotiation. The king even assured him that none could be more ready than himself to throw off the Russian yoke. Before his departure, Mokranowski obtained from the senate written credentials, in which the patriots were recognised as a confederation, and thus shielded from the consequences of illegal rebellion.

Repnin in the interim had received his orders from Russia. Catharine declared the confederates rebels and enemies to their country and king, and that she would lay waste the whole kingdom unless he united his troops with hers. Notwithstanding an armistice had been declared during the conference, the Russians marched seven regular regiments, and 5000 Cossacks, towards Bar, burning, pillaging, and murdering through the whole course of their route, and attacked small parties of the confederates by surprise. Pulawski was told that his three sons had perished in these skirmishes: his answer was, "I

am sure they have done their duty." But, on the contrary, young Casimir Pulawski was still living, and had repulsed the Russians three different times, with the determination and experience of a veteran, although he was but twenty-one years of age.

Mokranowski was thus made the apparent instrument of a perfidy; but such was the uprightness of his character, that even the victims themselves exonerated him from all suspicion of connivance in the villany. He returned to Warsaw and told the king, "Sire, either they deceive you, or you have deceived me. Be the case which it may, I cannot serve you any longer." He left Poland for France, and endeavoured to obtain the support of the French court in favour of his unfortunate countrymen.

Notwithstanding the threats of Russia, fresh confederations were daily forming. Count Joachim Polocki was at the head of a party of patriots in Galicia, and others were only waiting for an opportunity to aid him in all parts of the kingdom. The Russians were the objects of almost universal detestation; Repnin was execrated, and a plan was formed, even under the secret sanction of the king, to seize him. The daring individual who undertook this hazardous scheme was Dzirzanowski, one of the chamberlains. Fortune had thrown him into the strangest vicissitudes of life; he had fought in the French armies in the East Indies, and organized the sepoys in the European manner; chance then took him to America, Portugal, and Spain, and at last he found himself in Poniatowski's palace, where his vivacity and anecdote made him a great favourite of the king; but a violent love for his country still formed one of the ingredients of his anomalous character, and he advocated the patriotic cause without much disguise. His attempt miscarried, and flight alone saved him. The discovery only served to irritate Repnin and increase his activity against the confederates. Polocki's little army was obliged

to take refuge in Turkey, and the Russians prepared to exterminate the confederation of Bar. The Cossacks of the Ukraine took advantage of the Polish troubles, and committed the most barbarous atrocities under the Russian direction.

While Pulawski was absent from Bar, and attempting to rally Polocki's routed army, the Russians, conjointly with the king's troops, attacked the town. The fortifications were very trifling; a few embankments of earth, a dry ditch, and palisades. For a time the confederates made a stubborn resistance: a monk, named Mark, animated with fanaticism, exhorted them, and reminded them that they were fighting for their religion. He mounted the ramparts at the very moment when the Russians were about to fire their first gun, and made a sign of the cross. The cannon burst, an accident which was then very common from the badness of the Russian artillery. The besieged cried out that it was a miracle, and imagined that the hand of God was stretched forth in their defence. But dissensions among the confederates counteracted the good effects of this enthusiasm; in a few days the town was taken by assault, and 1200 prisoners were carried in chains to Russia.

New confederations were formed in Lithuania, at Lokroczim near Warsaw, and at Cracow. The latter place became, from its situation, the rallying point of the patriots, and resisted the enemies' attacks six weeks. But an event happened about this time, more serviceable to the cause than all these feeble and partial efforts. On the frontiers of Podolia there stands the little town of Balta, within the Turkish limits, and separated from Poland only by a rivulet. The Tartar governor, Jakoubaga, an inveterate enemy of Russia, had long sought an occasion to embroil that country in a war with Turkey. By the persuasion of the French ambassador, he urged a small remnant of the scattered confederates

to attack the Russians, and decoy them into the Turkish territory. The enemy pursued them to Balta, took the town, and slaughtered a considerable number of Mussulmans: the place was fired, as supposed, by the Tartar himself; and the Russians, thinking the confederation was entirely quelled, withdrew. Jakoubaga sent information of the affair to Constantinople, and the grand vizier summoned the Russian ambassador to an audience. In the winter of 1768 the Turks and Tartars entered New Servia, a province which the Russians had unjustly seized, and took back 35,000 prisoners.

This news revived the spirits of the confederates. Pulawski returned from his refuge in Moldavia, but trusting imprudently to a Tartar governor, he was arrested. Confederations were daily forming in Lithuania, under Radziwill, Count Paç, and others. There were also other spectators interested in the approaching contest between Russia and Turkey: Austria and Prussia kept each other in check, each with 200,000 men in marching order, and waited for the result.

The opening of the campaign in 1769 was inauspicious: the Russians entered Moldavia, drove the Turks before them, and took Chocim. This, however, was but a temporary success, and their retreat was as rapid as their inroad had been impetuous. The skirmishing recommenced with the confederates, but without any advantage. Of all the family of Pulawski Casimir alone survived, and he saved himself by a retreat to Hungary, with an escort of only ten men.

Three hundred thousand troops, the main body of the Turkish army, entered Moldavia, in the direction of Poland. The Poles dreaded the Turks for visitors as much as they did the Russians; and the bishop of Kamiéniec wrote from his retreat at Teschen, in Austrian Silesia, which was now the head-quarters of the confederates, to Count Polocki, that "to bring

in the Turks to drive away the Russians, was like setting fire to a house to drive away vermin." Polocki went himself to the Turkish camp to endeavour to direct their operations against the Russian frontier. The grand vizier, who commanded the army, was named Mahomet Emin; he had raised himself from the station of a wandering silk merchant to his present lofty office; but his talents had not been directed to the study of war, for this was the first military expedition he had ever been engaged in. He expressed an animosity against Poland as decided as Russia; and his policy was to ruin it irrevocably, "to make a desert there, that it might be no more a subject for ambition, jealousy, or war; that the system of protecting Poland, and entering into an alliance with her, for the object of using it as a rampart against the Russians, might be good for the Christian courts, which, by unstable alliances which they make and unmake at will, change and rechange the face of all Europe. It pleases them; but such a plan could never enter among the counsels of an empire which makes its operations depend only on its will and power, and *whose policy has always been to surround itself on all sides with deserts.*"

Such a man did not bid fair to be a very favourable auditor, and when Polocki represented that the confederates flattered themselves, "that in this untoward conjuncture Poland would meet with the same aid that the Porte had granted her in so many instances, and that the arms of the Turks would assist her to recover her liberty;" Mahomet rejoined, "He thinks we are not acquainted with our history. Teach him that the Porte has never supported infidels, and that it remembers how often it has had reason to complain of the Poles. He imagines that he is treating here with a Christian power, accustomed to sport with truth and falsehood. Do you know," added he, turning to his officers, "what these people call their liberty? It is the right of living with-

out laws." When his wrath had effervesced, the cham of the Tartars added his influence to that of Polocki; and it was agreed that a detachment of Turks and Tartars, under the command of the cham, should march towards the Dnieper, and at the same time the confederates, with an auxiliary army, should proceed to the deliverance of their country, while the grand vizier, with the main body, should advance as far as Bender, to watch the issue of the enemy's design.

Peremptory orders in the mean time reached the Russian army, to take Chocim, on the Dniester. The confederates and their Turkish detachment had the same destination, and thus the two armies daily approached each other, although such was their want of precaution and intelligence, that neither was aware of it until close at hand. A rencounter took place; but the Turks fled precipitately at the first discharge of artillery. They were mostly raw soldiers, and were so startled at the enemy's facility in managing their great guns, that they imputed it to magic; and one of the pachas, who was taken prisoner, requested to see "those enchanted cannon, which were moved," said he, "by a word, and fired more than a hundred times without being reloaded." Fifteen thousand of the fugitives threw themselves into Chocim, where they were joined by the confederates under Polocki.

The Russians invested the town on the 14th of July, and turned the siege into a blockade; but the courage and prudence of Polocki made it hold out three weeks, at the expiration of which time the siege was raised by a Turkish pacha, Moldavangi, at the head of 4000 men, and the cham soon arrived, having made a countermarch on receiving news of the Russian inroad. The enemy repassed the Dniester in the night, and cut down the bridges. At this very time the vizier lost his head, and the Pacha Moldavangi was elevated to his important office. He constructed a temporary bridge, and before cross-

ing it, published a manifesto of a very different spirit from what might have been expected from his predecessor, and which completely reconciled the Poles to the Turks' entrance into their country. On the 16th of September the Turks passed the river to the number of 60,000, and attacked the Russians with some advantage. But a rumour had for some days prevailed in the Turkish army that the bridge was endangered by the rapid current of the river, swollen by continual rains: a panic struck them, when they looked back for a moment, at the sight of the unsafe but only means of retreat; the battle was at an end, and they rushed in an immense mass towards the tottering bridge; the weight of the cannon was too much for the temporary structure, the rafts gave way, and left 6000 or 7000 men on the side nearest to the enemy. These were mostly cut to pieces; sedition and discontent sprung up in the Turkish army, and one general rout ensued; Chocim was deserted, and the road into Moldavia was open to the Russians.

Thus were the fond hopes of the confederates again blighted. During the successes of the Turks the confederation had become nearly general, and one decisive victory only was wanting to arm all Poland. Still, however, a small party held up their heads, and "hoped even against hope." In the beginning of November the marshals and deputies of the district confederacies met at Biala, or Bilitz, a town on the frontiers of Silesia, half of which is in Poland and half in Silesia, and proclaimed Count Krasinski marshal-general of the kingdom, and Count Polocki commander-in-chief of the forces. Count Paç was appointed *locum tenens*, in the absence of these two.

The king still remained a mere cipher; he had 7000 troops, but they acted only as his own guards. His former tyrant and keeper, Repnin, was recalled; but his policy still continued his influence, and the only liberty which the court party could obtain, at

the expense of an extraordinary display of spirit, was to remain neuter, and watch the struggle between the Russian oppressors and the Turkish champions of their country.

The winter drove the Russians back to Poland; and, wearied with their campaign, they seemed to relax from their former vigilance and cruelty to the confederates. The Russian ambassador, Volkonski, who had succeeded Repnin, was a shade or too less bloody; old age had somewhat blunted his tyrannical spirit, and he sat down, contented for the present with cutting off the confederates' communication with their council at Bilitz. The state of the patriots, so long accustomed to skirmishing warfare, may be readily imagined. Hunted like wild beasts, many were almost become so; persecuted like outlaws, some began to think legal ties were no longer binding; the confederate soldiery "wandered without plan, without restraint, without discipline; issuing from the depths of woods to seize their subsistence in the villages with armed force; without ammunition, and obliged even to steal lead from the churches to make balls."*

Finding that their retreat at Bilitz was not so safe from the Russians as they could wish, and that the communication with Poland was restricted, the confederates removed their council to Eperies, in Hungary, and troops of patriot soldiers occupied the passes of the Carpathian mountains. They were visited here by the emperor Joseph II., who held some conversation with Count Paç and other chiefs; and Paç seized the moment to request an audience for the next day, which was granted. The conference, however, was fruitless. In the month of February, 1770, the confederates made an attack on Petrickau, a town forty leagues from Warsaw, and even approached the capital, but were obliged to

* Rulhière.

disperse. A continued series of skirmishes then ensued among the Carpathian mountains, where the patriots took refuge. All this, however, was merely the ebullition of the spirit which was working unseen in Poland, and which only waited for a single favourable opportunity to burst forth. The little council of Eperies sat watching, impatiently, the progress of spring to hear the signal for the renewal of hostilities between Russia and Turkey, trusting, that in the struggle some fortunate crisis, of which they might take advantage, would present itself.

CHAPTER VIII.

Grand Plan of the Russian Campaign in 1770—Insurrection of Greece—Elphinston sails into the Dardanelles—Russian Fleet in the Levant—Defeat of the Turks by Land—State of the Confederates—French Agents, M. de Taules, Dumourier, and Vioménil—Valiant Defence of Czenstochowa—Vioménil's Account of the Confederates—Saldern, and Russian Cruelties—The Austrians seize Zips—The Prussians enter Poland—Attempt to carry off Stanislas from Warsaw—Decline of the Confederacy—Treachery of Zaremba—Treaty between Russia, Austria, and Prussia—Dispersion of the Confederates.

THE Russian plan for the campaign of 1770 was on a grand and almost romantic scale. Two armies were to enter Turkey on the north, one by Moldavia, the other by New Servia; two fleets were to set sail, one to scour the Mediterranean, and the other from the Black Sea; the Dardanelles were to be forced, and all these armaments, military and naval, meeting from the north, east, south, and west, at Constantinople, were to overthrow the throne of the sultans. Another and a nobler scheme formed also a part of the design; Greece was to shake off her chains and aid the destruction of her tyrants.

This project is ascribed to the gigantic genius of Peter the Great; and it must be confessed that its

marked features and character give it a very probable affinity to the towering offspring of that great man's mind.* In February, one Russian fleet under Admiral Spiritoff was on the coasts of the Peloponnesus; and by the beginning of May another squadron reinforced it. The latter was commanded by Elphinston, a Scotchman, who staked his head to the empress that he would force the Dardanelles. So confident was he of success, that, during his stay in London, where he put in on his passage, he freely stated his plan to bombard Constantinople. "A naval fight," said he, "will take place; we shall gain it with God's good-will, and then we shall pass these famous Dardanelles as easily as I drink this pot of beer." The Peloponnesus, Thessaly, and the "Isles of Greece" rose up in arms at the sight of the Russian ships. On the 5th of July the Russians burnt the Turkish fleet of above twenty-five ships in the straits of Scio, and Elphinston sailed to the Dardanelles. The Russians, either through fear or jealousy, refused to accompany him; he sailed alone into the midst of the channel, without firing a single gun, cast anchor, ordered a flourish of trumpets and drums, drank tea, and rejoined the fleet. But so disgusted was he at his disappointment that he left the service, and returned home. There is no doubt that the Russians might have struck a decisive blow, the Turks being almost entirely unprepared. So chimerical did the project appear to the Turkish minister when the French ambassador warned him of it, that he took up a map, and pointing out Petersburg, said to him, "Show me how a fleet can sail from there to here! We have never had any Russians on the south; we can only fear them on the north." But such indecision and discord prevailed in the Russian fleet, that they took up their winter-quarters in the island of Paros without having struck

* The idea was not exclusively Peter's own, for Sobieski, inferior as his mind was to the czar's, had proposed this scheme to Leopold.

any effective blow. The seeds of liberty, however, which were now sown in Greece were not "cast by the road-side, but had taken root," and already borne fruit. Thus was this year, which "paved the way to villain bonds" for one nation, the first dawn of liberty to another.*

The Russian armies had taken the field about the end of June, and marched on their destined routes. That which proceeded from New Servia invested Bender on the Dniester. The other, consisting only of 17,000, entered Moldavia, and encountered the Turks on the banks of the Danube. The Moslem troops amounted to 150,000; but notwithstanding the immense disparity of numbers, victory declared on the side of the Russians. On the 26th of September Bender was taken by assault; Ismail also fell into the Russians' hands in October; and thus the campaign again broke up unfavourably to Turkey.

All this argued ill to the cause of the confederates; and to add to their alarm, an ominous amity seemed to be springing up between Prussia and Austria. Frederic and the Emperor Joseph had interviews, both on the 25th of August, 1769, and again on the 3d of September, 1770. This latter conference would have alarmed the patriots still more, had they known that a messenger from Turkey was present at it, to request the mediation of the two powers to effect a peace with Russia. France was the only nation which continued to uphold the confederates. The consistent policy of the French minister, the Duc de Choiseul had armed the Turks in their cause, and still continued covertly to lend them some feeble aid. M. de Taulest† had been employed, towards the

* The interesting history of the Greek insurrection and the Russian expedition is given in Rulhière's valuable work,—*Histoire de l'Anarchie de Pologne*, vol. iii. p. 287.

† This gentleman is the author of a work on the Man in the Iron Mask, in which he satisfactorily solves that historical riddle.

latter part of 1768, to negotiate with the council, and convey them a considerable sum of money; but found their cause so hopeless that he returned as he went. Ten or twelve French officers had been enrolled among the confederates in the last campaign.* During the present year the French minister allowed them a subsidy of 6000 ducats a month; and M. Durand, the resident agent at Vienna, had the charge of transmitting it. M. Dumourier was commissioned, in July, by the government to confer and act with the council. He reached Eperies in August, and endeavoured to establish unanimity between the confederates. His reports of their military strength are contradictory, and in fact their forces were very fluctuating; but at this time they seem to have been as follows, namely—about 1500 men under Walewski, the palatine of Sieradz, 1000 under another partisan, and 4000 or 5000 more under Zaremba and Pulawski. Zaremba was chosen marshal of Great Poland, into which province he contrived to make frequent incursions.

The council had formally proclaimed the throne vacant; and the act was registered in all the public offices of Poland. Three confederates went to Warsaw, entered the palace, and in observance of the legal form, one of them presented to the king a summons to appear before the council of the confederation. Poniatowski took the paper, thinking it a petition; and while he was casting his eyes over

* Among these was the Chevalier Thesby de Belcour, who has given us a picture of the state of the patriots at that time. "Our marshals were living on the worst terms with each other.—I must do that justice to the Poles which they deserve; they are brave and courageous; but, unfortunately, they depend too much on their valour: they have neglected to instruct themselves; and their neighbours, more enlightened and better disciplined, have derived from their knowledge of the art of war every possible advantage.—The spirit of cabal and self-love, so out of place, particularly in such circumstances, spoils all.—The Poles had the best opportunities to distinguish themselves.—We may say the Poles have destroyed themselves."—See *Mémoire de M. Le Chevalier Thesby de Belcour, Colonel au Service des Confédérés de Pologne*, p. 67 of "*Lettres Particulières du Baron de Vioménil, &c.*"

it, the three confederates, lost in the crowd, were soon out of sight.

In the latter part of August, 1770, Pulawski came down from the mountains and seized the fortified abbey of Czenstokow, on the banks of the river Warta. Four thousand Russians laid siege to it in Jan. 1771. The patriots were so badly supplied with clothes, that even at this season of the year the sentinels were obliged to leave their dresses for those who relieved guard; and in case of an attack, many were obliged to fight in their shirts. Every assault furnished them with a new supply of dress, and by the end of the siege all the garrison was dressed in Russian uniforms. The enemy were obliged to raise the siege, leaving 1200 men dead.

The confederates were never more formidable than in the winter of 1770 and the beginning of 1771. They occupied all the advantageous posts, and were abundantly supplied with ammunition and provisions.

The year 1771 brought the patriots no brighter prospects on the side of Turkey. The campaign opened in April; and the Russians being still victorious, the Turks grew weary of a war which was only a series of defeats and losses. Proposals of peace were made formally by the 30th of May, and the negotiation continued, under the mediation of Austria and Prussia, till the next year. The naval expedition effected nothing of consequence; in fact it served only to ruin the trade of the Levant, as well that of the Christian nations as of the Turks.

In the beginning of 1771 the confederates under Pulawski had about 5000 horse in the palatinate of Cracow on the confines of Hungary; 4000 horse under Zaremba in Great Poland on the west of the Warta; 800 foot garrisoned in the abbey of Czenstokow, and other scattered troops not under subordination. There were also nearly 3000 confederates armed in Lithuania. Dumourier had introduced

stricter discipline among these troops, which rendered them more formidable the present year than when their numerical strength had been much greater. This agent, however, was no longer acting under the direction of the French minister, the Duc de Choiseul having been superseded in December, 1770, by the Duc d'Aiguillon; and it was observed that Dumourier began to stretch his brief authority, and dictate to the council. Pulawski had been surprised by the Russian general Suwarow, at the head of more than 3000 men, and obliged to retreat; and Dumourier took on himself to pass on that distinguished patriot the censure of cowardice. But the censor met with a reverse himself at Landscow* immediately after. His own account of this affair, which he gives in his *Memoirs*, shifts all the blame on the Pole's shoulders,† and mentions his own share of the transaction with much self-satisfaction. This happened on the 22d of June, and from this time Dumourier's ardour in the patriotic cause was entirely extinguished. He represented the confederates as unworthy of any protection, and advised a speedy termination of the contest.‡ About this time the Baron de Vioménil was deputed by the French

* Or Lanckrona, near Cracow.

† "Il (Dumourier) veut se mettre à la tête des Lithuaniens d'Orsowsko, avec le Prince Sapieha; ces lâches fuient, massacrent eux mêmes Sapieha, jeune prince plein de courage. Orsowsko et quelques autres sont tirés. Il court aux hussards de Schütz, qui au lieu de sabrer, font une décharge des carabines et prennent la fuite, &c."—*Vie de Dumourier*.

‡ "An end must absolutely be put to this war. The diversion of Poland occupies but very few Russians; it enriches them, and gives them a legitimate pretext to augment and strengthen their army at the expense of the country.—The confederation has no military resources. Nothing remains but the negotiation of the patriotic powers to save Poland from the slavery to which disgraceful manners, cowardice, insubordination, disorder, and the incapability of its defenders are dragging it."—"Notice sur le General Dumourier," prefixed to "Lettres particulières du Baron de Vioménil."

This is the same Dumourier who was so notorious in the French revolution, and who afterward recanted and came to England, when he was taken into the minister's pay. He died near Henley in 1823.—See his *Life* written by himself.

minister to succeed Dumourier.* He says he found "the troops ruined, undisciplined, and without any consistency or order;—the soldiers without pay, almost naked, badly fed, badly armed, and still worse trained.—The troops of the confederation, which amount to 6200 horse, and 1800 infantry, occupy in the two Polands a line of 140 French leagues from the frontiers of Hungary at Nowitarg, as far as the Warta, a little beyond Posen. The Russians oppose to these troops in these two provinces a force of 10,500 infantry and cavalry, and 5000 of the king's troops; there are about 3000 Russians in Lithuania, and as many armed confederates."†

The Russian ambassador, this year, resident at Warsaw, was Saldern; a man whose character may be summed up in the few words, that he was a worthy successor of the preceding. He designated the confederates "brigands and rascals," and ordered the commanders not to treat them as prisoners of war, but as criminals.

These orders were readily obeyed; and, in fact, the preceding campaign had been carried on too much in this spirit. Belcour, the French officer before mentioned, tells us, that the Russians "plundered, ravaged, and committed the most barbarous and revolting atrocities;" and that he himself saw 500 wagon-loads of booty carried off to Russia. Drezwitz, a colonel in the Russian service, made himself most notorious for cruelty to the confederates. He used to enjoy sights of torment, like an Indian savage. "He used to cause," says Belcour,‡ "the hands of some, the feet, &c. of others, to be cut off, and put into their mouths; he used to order those whose figure did not please him to be cut in pieces: all these brutalities were executed in his presence,

* He set out in August, 1771, with several French officers, to the aid of the confederates.

† Lettres de Vioménil, let. i.

‡ P. 83.

and he seemed to take delight in them.”* This fiend in human shape found too many imitators among the Russian officers. Clemency is one of the virtues which has always been banished by the menials of despotic governments; but it is pleasing to find, that although the sufferings of slaves are known not to awaken much fellow-feeling and sympathy for others, the privates were much more merciful than their leaders. One exception was found among the horde of savages in Weymaon, the commander-in-chief; but the bloody Saldern contrived to have him removed from his office.

The patriots were branded with opprobrious names by more persons than Saldern. Poniatowski, abject as he was, had flatterers, who couched their compliments to him in invectives against his enemies. “The kingdom,” says Solignac, one of this train, “was inundated with writings against Stanislas Augustus; and who were the authors of these libels, which thus traduced *virtue*?—Brigands, stained with blood, leagued with the enemies of the state.” We will let the confederates themselves protest against this, in the following words: “To qualify with the odious title of rebels the inhabitants who wish to shake off the yoke of oppression; to name those who exert themselves to defend their laws and liberty, disturbers of the public peace; to treat as an insolent mob an assembly composed of the most enlightened and respectable persons among the Poles! is this acting generously on the part of people from whom we ought with justice to expect assistance?” &c.†

“All hope,” wrote Vioménil, at the latter part of

* The editor of this “Mémoire” insinuates that this picture of barbarity is over-drawn by Belcour, whose spleen was affected by his being made prisoner and sent to Siberia for two or three years; he says, also, that these cruelties were not sanctioned by the authorities. This, however, is incorrect.

† Manifeste du Comte Oginski, Grand-General de Lithuanie, Du 12 Sept. 1771.

the year 1771, "depends on the continuation of the war between the Turks and Russians." As early as 1770, the Austrians had shown the confederates that no protection was to be expected from that quarter; and an ominous seizure of the little starosty of Zips* had called forth, even from Poniatowski, a letter of protestation against the injustice. Maria Theresa answered this very unsatisfactorily in January, 1771, and the Austrians advanced, instead of withdrawing. The Prussians, too, impatient to be let loose on this devoted kingdom, made similar encroachments on the north-west; and, entering from Silesia, advanced as far as Posen and Thorn. Four thousand Prussian cavalry, under pretence of seeking horses, had advanced to the Dniester, and taken up their quarters on its banks. Such were the prospects of the Polish patriots at the close of the year 1771.

An attempt to seize the king, which was made about this time by some of the confederates, and failed, brought much discredit on their cause. The friends of the patriots represent their design to have been merely to obtain his person; whereas the other party industriously disseminated the report that their object was assassination. Strawinski was the framer of the plan, and he proposed it to Pulawski; but he, wishing to avoid the odium, and yet not altogether opposed to the scheme, refused his sanction, while he withheld his dissent. "I give you no orders," said he; "but I forewarn you that I shall approve the plan, only as you respect the life of the prisoner whom you are going to seize." "Twenty times," replied Strawinski, "I could have killed him in Warsaw, and I abstained from it for the interest of the confederation. Why should you suspect me of wishing to discredit, when I seek only to serve it? It is Ponia-

* This is a little district, consisting of sixteen towns, situated among the Carpathian mountains. It had formerly been in the possession of Hungary, but had been mortgaged in 1387 to Poland. More will be said of this seizure in the following chapter.

towski living that I have resolved to deliver up to it.”*

Notwithstanding this pretended refusal of connivance, Pulawski fixed the time for the attempt, which was the 3d of November. He also employed himself in making diversions of the Russian troops from Warsaw, so that 200 only were left in the city. Strawinski had ascertained that the king would be passing from his uncle's house to the palace that evening; and accordingly, at half past nine, the king was seen to come out, attended by two persons, in his carriage, two pages, two outriders, and followed by two guards, and two valets on foot. Strawinski had divided his men into three bands. The first came up as Russian patrols, and stopped the advanced guard, while the second attacked the carriage, and the third was stationed at the entrance of the wood of Bielani, without the town. The two guards resisted and were killed; and Poniatowski, after some trouble, was dragged on horseback, without any injury, but a little rough handling in the hurry: and the confederates rode on with their prize towards their place of destination.

The alarm, in the mean time, was given by the servants, but in the confusion of the moment, no steps were taken to stop the fugitives. Not far from Warsaw the troop met with a ditch, which they were obliged to leap, and in so doing the king's horse broke its leg, and the delay which this caused separated the second company from the first. Attempting to find them, they lose their way in the dark, get into a marsh, lose each other, and Poniatowski is soon left with only one man. This confederate's name was Kosinski, who, from being before one of the boldest conspirators, now becomes the most timid. This man had been especially charged by Strawinski to seize the king, and take charge of him; but, falling

* Rulhière's *Histoire de l'Anarchie de Pologne*, tom. iv. p. 231

on his knees, he declared himself his prisoner. The king conducted him to a mill that was at hand, wrote to Warsaw for a guard of forty men, and was in the city early in the morning. The conspirators were pursued by the Cossacks, and one of them killed; while Kosinski, for being either a coward or traitor, was rewarded as the preserver of the king's life.

It was immediately rumoured in Warsaw that Poniatowski had escaped assassination, nor did he discredit the assertion, although he was a living proof that his death was not intended. He said, in his usual strain, that he even regretted he had not accompanied the confederates to the fortress of Czenstokow, because he would have harangued and converted the malecontents, and that this triumph of his eloquence would have been the most glorious event of his reign.

Foreign courts congratulated Poniatowski on his escape from murder, and gave further currency to the report. Two of the conspirators were afterward taken and executed, and the rest, among whom Pulawski was comprehended, were condemned by the same sentence to capital punishment.*

The odium which was studiously attached to this attempt still further injured the cause of the patriots. They were denounced as rebels, assassins, and brigands. Every thing conspired to render the approaching year, 1772, the last of Polish independence. Vioménil and his little band, indeed, still urged on the confederates to make a dying struggle; Pulawski,

* Solignac, and others of the same party, represent this attempt in the most odious light. They even pervert the facts with the greatest audacity, pretending to give a most circumstantial account of the wounds (some call them bullet-grazes, others sword-cuts) which they say Stanislas received from the confederates. Solignac relates another story; he says a gunpowder plot was discovered, and that the powder was really laid under the palace, that the match was lit, and that in ten minutes more the explosion would have taken place. The reader will judge what degree of trust is to be given to this author's impartiality, when he finds him talking of the "odious" name of the confederates, of the "virtue" of Stanislas, and calling the patriots "brigands stained with blood, and leagued with the enemies of the state."—See Solignac's *Hist.*, vol. vi. p. 167, &c.

Kossakowski, and Zarembo formed a line with their little armies, amounting to about 6,000 men, from Czenstokow to Widawa in Great Poland; Choisi, a distinguished French officer, seized the castle of Cracow on the night of the 1st of February, and bravely defended himself: but all proved of no avail.

On the 18th of March the council issued orders for the troops in Great Poland to unite and attack a detachment of the Russians at Pétérkow. Zarembo refused to obey the command, in consequence of which the troops in that province were almost entirely broken up. The Prussians continued to advance in Great Poland as far as the Warta, and gave the confederates notice to evacuate many of their posts.* The present conduct of Zarembo was suspicious, and the event showed that the fear of his treachery was too well founded. "His extraordinary conduct," wrote Vioménil,† "can be imputed only to designs very fatal to the republican party; and we may expect every moment that he is going to make his own peace, or that he will allow all his troops to be taken uncollectively by the Prussians.—In either case I can only foresee the loss of all his corps, and consequently the entire destruction of the confederation.

* The following is a copy of the letter addressed by the Prussian general to the authorities of the confederate troops.

Helmstadt, March 22, 1772.

I have had the honour to receive the letter which you have been pleased to address to me of the 16th of the present month. To satisfy you, sir, I must tell you it is by command of the king, my master, that I have ordered the seizure of the forage in question, in the vicinity of Szduri, Koblin, &c. His majesty, having determined to advance his troops as far as Warta, has at the same time commissioned me to inform the gentlemen of the confederation, that they will be acting prudently to withdraw their forces from the towns and the environs of Frauenstadt, Liassa, Rawitz, &c. This is the will of the king, my master, which I beg you, sir, to convey to Marshal Zarembo; and I hope, that to avoid the disagreeable consequences, of which the confederation would be the sole cause, they will not delay to evacuate this territory.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) CZKLTZITZ.

To M. Sierazowski.

† *Lettres Particulières de Vioménil*, let. ix. p. 236.

—M. Piwinicki, who has just arrived from Great Poland, assures me that the Prussians on the 2d and 3d of this month (April) have attacked Zaremba's troops, who occupied the little towns of Frauenstadt, Lezno, and Szduri. This, sir, is the decisive moment; to all appearance the Prussian forces will soon have their right on Cracow, and their left on Dantzic." A few days afterward Zaremba announced his resignation to the council, and applied to Saldern, the Russian ambassador, for an amnesty. About the same time, too, the confederates were informed by Prince Jablonowski, their deputy at Vienna, that an alliance was signed between Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and that they designed to seize some palatinates. On the 22d of April, the castle of Cracow was obliged to surrender, and nearly at the same time 10,000 Austrians under Count Esterhazy entered Poland from Hungary. The council was broken up; all the posts were deserted, and the confederation was at an end. The chiefs dispersed into foreign countries. Pulawski retired to America, and fell in the cause of freedom near Savannah; while a few of the patriots, assembled at Braunau in Bavaria, made a useless protestation against the invasion, and sent it to the different courts of Europe.

Such was the fate of the famous confederates of Bar. Like all other unfortunate enterprises, theirs has been repeatedly the object of vituperation and scandal. They have been viewed as bigots and lawless rebels, by the jaundiced eye of power; and even those who think for themselves have deemed it useless to defend a cause that no longer existed, for the sake of abstract argument on general principles. But that must be short-sighted reasoning indeed which sees in the affair of the dissidents the only cause of the confederacy, or, in fact, any thing more than one of the ostensible grounds of complaint. The grievances which rankled in the breasts of the confederates form the burden of their manifestoes,

and are, "suspension of the liberty of the diets, foreign encroachment, seizure of the principal men of the nation, &c." That they were not lawless rebels is well proved by Count Oginski, the grand-general of Lithuania, in his manifesto of the 12th of September, 1771. "One of the most ancient rights of the Polish state," he says, "is, that whenever foreign troops enter the country, the generals should assemble the army of the republic," &c.* No syllogistic reasoning fortunately is requisite to draw the line between right and wrong in this case of political oppression; every feeling of indignation at the tyranny of Russia rises up in evidence to aid the justice of the cause of the Polish confederation.

CHAPTER IX.

Origin of the Plan of Partition—Prediction of Stanislas—Relations of the three Powers—Frederic—Maria Theresa—Kaunitz—The Emperor Joseph has an Interview with Frederic at Neiss—Interview at Neustad—Frederic's Encroachments and Tyranny in Polish Prussia—The Austrians seize Zips—Prince Henry's Visit to Petersburg—Prince Henry proposes the Partition—The three Powers sign the Treaty of Partition—Division—"Defences" of the three Powers—"Deduction," &c.—The Diet of Partition—Patriots, Reyten, Korsak, &c.—Poninski, the Marshal—Reyten's bold Resistance—The Diet appoint Commissioners—The Treaty is ratified—Permanent Council—Inaction of Foreign Powers.

THE fulness of time was now come to show the Poles the accomplishment of the prophecy which had been so often shouted in their ears to no purpose by the true friends of the republic, that the mutual jealousies of their neighbours was not a sufficient safeguard from foreign encroachment and oppression. They seemed to forget, that even supposing the

* See Vioménil's Letters, p. 167

states of Europe were able to counterpoise each other, the balance of power was constantly vibrating; and that the equilibrium might be preserved, as well by making the Polish shares to be taken by the several powers proportionate, as by keeping to their own boundaries.

One who was the most competent to judge of the interests and prospects of Poland, from having been its sovereign, had exhorted them many years before, in the plainest and most forcible terms, to open their eyes to their danger. "I reflect," said the royal and beneficent philosopher, Stanislas Leszczyński, "with dread upon the perils which surround us; what force have we to resist our neighbours? and on what do we found this extreme confidence which keeps us chained, as it were, slumbering in disgraceful repose? Do we trust to the faith of treaties? How many examples have we of the frequent neglect of even the most solemn agreements! We imagine that our neighbours are interested in our preservation by their mutual jealousy—a vain prejudice, which deceives us; ridiculous infatuation, which formerly cost the Hungarians their liberty, and which will surely deprive us of ours, if depending on such a frivolous hope we continue unarmed; our turn will come, no doubt; either we shall be the prey of some famous conquerors, or, perhaps, *even the neighbouring powers will combine to divide our states.*"* In vain were this and similar appeals made to the Poles; sad experience only was to convince them of their truth.

The whole of the preceding history has been an exposition of the course of events which finally left Poland so entirely at the mercy of the adjacent powers; and it now remains for us to solve that singular problem,—how the three states, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, agreed to forget for a time their mutual jealousies to portion out this unfortunate country.

* "Observations on the dangers to which Poland is exposed by the abuses of its government."—See "*Euvres Choisies de Stanislas.*"

Some writers, possessed with the love of reducing political transactions to one rigid scale of cause and effect, and at the same time of exhibiting their acumen by threading the mazes of events up to remote circumstances, pretend to trace the design of the partition of Poland for more than a century back. Rulhière seems to plume himself on the idea: "The projects executed in our days against Poland," he observes, "were proposed more than a hundred years ago. I have discovered this important and hitherto unknown circumstance in the archives of foreign affairs of France." This point had been canvassed under the reign of John Casimir; and it only remains to be remarked, that such very subtle analysis of the motives and progress of actions generally overshoots the mark, since no men can act always according to rule, but are in some degree influenced by circumstances and caprice. It would be equally absurd to imagine that Frederic, in the complicated intrigues which preceded the first partition, was actuated by one deeply laid scheme of policy to arrive at one end, the possession of Polish Prussia. It was, indeed, absolutely essential for him to obtain this province, to consolidate and open a communication between his scattered dominions, which then, as Voltaire says, were stretched out like a pair of gaiters; but it remained a desideratum rather than a design,* since he knew that neither Russia nor Austria would be inclined to permit the aggression; for the former had evidently marked out the whole of Poland for herself, and would consider Frederic an unwelcome intruder; while Austria, which had lately experienced the Prussian king's encroachments, was more jealous than ever of his obtaining the slightest aggrandizement, and had openly de-

* Frederic had some distant hopes in the early part of his reign. "Quatre points principaux s'offroient à mes yeux; la Silesie, la Prusse Polonoise, la Gueldie Holandoise, et la Pomeranie Suedoise. Je me fixai à la Silesie, et je laisse au tems le soin d'executer mes projets sur les autres points."—*Matinées d'un Roi*, p. 32.

clared, that she would not allow the seizure of the least Polish village. His views, however, widened as he advanced, and no doubt he spoke with sincerity, when he told the Emperor Joseph that "he had never followed a plan in war, much less any plan in policy, and that events alone had suggested all his resolutions." Admitting the truth of this, we proceed to trace out the circumstances which produced this crisis.

The relations of the three courts, at the commencement of the war between Russia and Turkey, did not portend any thing like a coalition; Frederic, indeed, was in alliance with Russia,* but also secretly favoured the sultan; Austria was all but an open enemy of both Russia and Prussia. Circumstances, however, obliged Austria to forget her hatred to Prussia, and Frederic thus became the mediator between the courts of Vienna and Petersburg. Frederic had every reason to wish to lull the suspicions and jealousies of Austria, that he might be left in undisputed possession of Silesia; and that power, moreover, was no longer an object of dread or jealousy to him, for the seven years' war had reduced its resources to the lowest ebb.† The dispositions of the court of Vienna cannot be comprised in so few words; its situation was much more complicated, its policy more embarrassed, and the persons who governed it will be much more difficult to make known.‡

Maria Theresa was now not very far from the tomb, and after all the arduous struggles she had undergone for the defence of her states, the vicissitudes she had experienced, and the exhaustion of her resources, she determined to end her days in peace. She devoted almost the whole of her time to super-

* This treaty was concluded in April, 1763, after the peace of Hubertsburg, and was to be in force eight years.

† Rulhière, tom. iv. p. 158.

‡ Rulhière gives a laboured analysis of the court of Vienna.

stitious devotions in a gloomy chamber hung round with death's heads, and a portrait of her late husband in the act of expiring. She yet cherished, however, some of the feelings of mortality, implacable hatred to Frederic, and contempt mingled with hate for Catharine, of whom she never spoke but with disdain, calling her "*that woman.*" Besides, she could sometimes also silence the reproaches of conscience, so as to seize for the public use the bequests of the pious for religious purposes, and to confiscate the revenues of rich monasteries apparently without any compunction. Men fancied, says our author,* that they could foresee in all this conduct that if this just and religious princess had power enough over herself to silence her generosity and even sometimes her piety, she might perhaps be capable in some state crisis of incurring still greater remorse, and silence justice. Her minister, Kaunitz, to whom she intrusted all the management of affairs, is not the least important personage in this drama, nor did he under-rate his own consequence. "Heaven," said he, "is a hundred years in forming a great mind for the restoration of an empire, and it then rests another hundred years; on this account I tremble for the fate which awaits this monarchy after me." Throughout a long and arduous ministry he had shown himself the most subtle and refined politician, unfettered in his schemes by any remorse or feeling, and making a boast that he had no friends. Such a man was well fitted to play the part allotted to him. After the conclusion of the long war, he had made it his policy to repair the damages the empire had sustained by alliances, and even his opposition to Frederic daily subsided.

But it was another agent who commenced the connexion between Austria and Prussia. Joseph, Maria Theresa's son, and co-regent with his mother, de-

* Rulhière.

tested this pacific policy, and longed for war. He was, however, obliged to submit; for Maria dreaded the effects of this warlike propensity, and kept the government in the hands of her ministers. He had continual contentions with the empress, and urged her to improve her finances by conquest or aggression; but all the power he could obtain was the command of the troops, which he augmented to 200,000 men, and organized them under the counsel of his field-marshal, Lasey. In his mania for military matters, he visited, in 1768, all the fields of battle of the last war, and after traversing Bohemia and Saxony, and learning from his generals the causes of the defeats and victories, he approached in the course of his tour the borders of Prussian Silesia, where Frederic was engaged in his annual reviews. The king sent a polite message, and expressed a great desire to be personally acquainted with him. The young prince could not pay a visit to the former enemy of his family without previously consulting his mother, the empress; and the interview was deferred till the next year; when it took place on the 25th of August, at Neiss, a town in Silesia.

At this period the war between Russia and Turkey engrossed general attention, and seems to have formed the principal subject of the conference; but no resolutions of any importance were agreed to. The flattering manner in which Frederic received the young prince must have made a great impression on his mind; and the extravagant compliments which were lavished on him were highly gratifying to youthful vanity, from such a great man. Frederic frequently repeated that Joseph would surpass Charles V.; and though it has the appearance of irony to those acquainted with the denouement of this youthful monarch's character, it was probably not intended so, for Frederic, we have seen before, could stoop to the most servile adulation when it answered his purpose. Be that as it may, the effect on Joseph

was the same, for on his return he spoke of the Prussian monarch with the highest enthusiasm.

Maria Theresa was growing old, and the Austrian ministers began to turn to the rising sun; the eyes of Kaunitz were opened to the policy of cultivating a friendship with Prussia; and the correspondence between the two courts became every day more frequent. This led to another conference between the two princes at Neustadt, in Moravia, which was held on the 3d of September, 1770, and at which Kaunitz was present. The king was more courteous than ever; he appeared in the military uniform of Austria, and continued to wear it as long as he remained in the Austrian territory. He made use of every species of compliment; one day, as they were leaving the dining-room, and the emperor made a motion to give him the precedence, he stepped back, saying, with a significant smile and *double entendre*, not lost on Joseph, "Since your imperial majesty begins to manœuvre, I must follow wherever you lead." Nor did he spare his civilities to Kaunitz, with the view of removing the rankling feeling which had often made that conceited minister exclaim, "The King of Prussia is the only man who denies me the esteem which is due to me." Kaunitz insisted on the necessity of opposing the ambitious views of Russia, and stated that the empress would never allow Catharine to take possession of Moldavia and Walachia, which would make her states adjoin those of Austria; nor permit her to penetrate farther into Turkey. He added, that an alliance between Austria and Prussia was the only means of checking Catharine's overbearing power. To this Frederic replied, that being in alliance with the court of Petersburg, his only practicable measure was to prevent the war from becoming general by conciliating the friendly feelings of Catharine towards Austria. On the day after this conference, a courier arrived from Constantinople, with the news of the destruction of the Turkish

fleet, and the route of their army, and to request the mediation of the courts of Vienna and Berlin. To this both readily assented, but without agreeing upon any terms.

Frederic did not forget to follow up his former mode of tactics with the emperor; he pretended to make him the confidant of all his designs, a species of flattery most gratifying to a young prince. On his return to Berlin, also, the king affected to imitate the Austrian manners, and uttered several pompous panegyrics on the talents of Joseph, who had recited to him some of Tasso's verses, and nearly a whole act of the *Pastor Fido*.

Thus did Frederic avail himself of circumstances to commence an amicable correspondence with Austria, and he thus became the medium of communication between the hostile courts of Vienna and Petersburg. No more direct intelligence, however, existed between these two states than before; for great as was Theresa's hatred against Catharine, Catharine's was no less violent; and even when Austria made friendly overtures, through Frederic, concerning mediation between Turkey and Russia, she desired Frederic to desist, and rejected the interference.

A channel of communication, however, was opened between the three conspiring powers; and the next step was for one of the triumvirate to broach the iniquitous partition plot. It is made a matter of much dispute which of them started the project, and they all equally disclaim the infamy of being its author. The fact, no doubt, was, that in this, as in all other unjust coalitions, they did not, in the first instance, act on a preconcerted plan; but each individual power cherished secretly its design, and like designing villains, who understand one another, almost

“Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words,”

the conspiring parties were naturally drawn together by the similarity of reckless atrocity in their designs.

It cannot be imagined that the scheme of partition originated with Catharine; she had long been the real mistress of Poland, the king was nothing more than her tenant at will, and it required only a little time for the whole kingdom to sink into a Russian province. The intentions of the other powers began to evince themselves more plainly in 1770. Frederic began to throw out hints of claims on certain Polish districts; he obliged the Polish Prussians to furnish his troops with horses and corn, in exchange for debased money, which was either forged Polish silver coin, only one-third of its nominal value, or false Dutch ducats, seventeen per cent. under the proper value.* By this disgraceful species of swindling, it is calculated, he gained 7,000,000 of dollars. The young Poles were enrolled in the armies by force; and every town and village in Posnania was taxed at a stated number of marriageable girls, who were sent to stock the districts of the Prussian dominions depopulated by the long wars. Each girl's portion was to be a bed, two pigs, a cow, and three ducats of gold. It is said that one town alone was obliged to furnish the Prussian general, Belling, with fifty girls. Under pretence that the magistrates of Dantzic prevented the levies, troops were marched into the territory of the city, a contribution of 100,000 ducats was exacted, and 1000 young men were pressed for the Prussian service. Frederic's military possession of Posnania, as well as the greater part of Polish Prussia, seemed to be but too consonant with his hinted claims, and his arbitrary levies evinced, not merely intended, but actual possession.

Austria, too, was playing a similar part on the south. In the spring of 1769 Birzynski, at the head of a small troop of confederates, entered Lubowla,

* He published an edict on the 29th of October, 1771, commanding all persons to take the money offered by his troops.

one of the towns in the starosty or district of Zips, or Spiz, with the intention of levying contributions, as he was accustomed, in a disorderly manner. This little district is situated to the south of the palatinate of Cracow, among the Carpathian mountains, and had been originally a portion of the kingdom of Hungary. The confederates were followed by the Russians, and took refuge in Hungary, as was their custom. This near approach of the Russians to the imperial frontiers was made a pretext by the court of Vienna for concentrating a body of troops there; and at the same time hints were thrown out of Austria's claims, not only to this, but some of the adjacent districts. Researches were ordered to be made into old records, to establish these pretensions; the Austrian troops seized the territory of Zips, and engineers were employed by the empress to mark out the frontier. They advanced the boundary line along the districts of Sandecz, Nowitarg, and Czorsztyń, and marked it out with posts furnished with the imperial eagle. Stanislas had complained of this proceeding in a letter of the 28th of October, 1770; to which the empress returned for answer, in January, 1771, that she would willingly make an amicable arrangement, after peace was established, to settle the disputed frontier, but that she was determined to claim her right to the district of Zips, and that for the present it was requisite to pursue the operation of demarcation. The empress seems to have been instigated not only by the characteristic avidity of Austrian policy, but by jealousies awakened by the near approaches of the Russian troops. Besides, it is a point of some consequence to be remembered, though it seems to have escaped the observation of most historians, that she had before her eyes a fearful proof of the danger of an uncertain frontier in the affair of Balta, which was the ostensible cause of the war between Turkey and Russia. This open encroachment on the Polish territory, however, was a

fatal precedent; Catharine and Frederic could advance, as excuses for their proceedings, that they were solely intended to restore tranquillity to Poland; and that their possession was only temporary, whereas Theresa's was a permanent seizure. Frederic, therefore, endeavours strenuously in his writings to exonerate his intentions from censure, and shifts the odium of this step on Austria; but whether he is absolutely innocent of the "injustice," as he himself calls it, or adds to his guilt by the height of hypocrisy and cant, is a question not very difficult of solution.

The three powers could now readily understand each other's designs; but the first communication which took place between them on the subject occurred in December, 1770, and Jan. 1771. In the former month Catharine invited Prince Henry, Frederic's brother, who had before been a personal acquaintance, to her court; and the wily despot of Prussia urged him earnestly to accept the invitation. He reached Petersburg in the midst of the public festivities and rejoicings for the victories over the Turks; and having, like his brother, abundant flattery at will, he seized the opportunity of loading Catharine with compliments. It would be absurd to suppose that the empress, masculine as her mind was, could be insensible to this species of attack; she, like all other followers of ambition and conquest, made the applause and admiration, even of the vulgar, the aim of her life; and it can only be affectation in those who pretend to despise the adulation which they so eagerly labour for. Henry was admitted to confidential conferences, and so well did he avail himself of his opportunities and influence, that he succeeded in persuading the empress to accept the mediation of Austria between Turkey and Russia,—a commission with which he was charged by his brother. It was in these conferences that the fate of Poland was decided; while Catharine was hesitating about

accepting the terms Austria proposed, which were that she should renounce her design upon Moldavia and Walachia, the news arrived at Petersburg that the Austrian troops had taken possession of Zips. Catharine was much astonished at the proceeding, and remarked, that if Austria seized the Polish territory, the two other neighbouring powers must imitate her example until she desisted. This hint suggested to Henry a mode of removing those objections of Austria which impeded the negotiation. He knew that the court of Vienna was as eager for aggrandizement as Russia, and that all her jealousies would be allayed by a similar accession of territory; that at the same time she would never consent to have the Russians as her neighbours in Moldavia and Walachia, but would have no objection to their making an equal increase to that immense empire elsewhere. Frederic's consent, also, must be purchased by an equal allotment; where then, he thought, were there three such portions to be found but where Austria pointed out. Catharine approved of the plan after a few moments' reflection, but mentioned two impediments;—first, that when her troops had entered Poland she had solemnly declared that she would maintain the integrity of the kingdom;* and next, that Austria would not receive such a proposal from her without suspicion. These difficulties were readily removed, the first by breaking the engagement, and the second by making Frederic the negotiator with the court of Vienna.

Frederic's admirers pretend that he was unacquainted with this intrigue, and when the plan was made known to him, opposed it strenuously; "but that on the following day, having reflected on the misfortunes of the Poles, and on the impossibility of re-establishing their liberty, he showed himself more tractable." It is to be hoped, that for the sake of

* The 9th section of the code of 1767 stated, "that no part was ever to be dismembered."

Frederic's remnant of character, this is not true; after the singular manner in which he had evinced his concern for "the misfortunes of the Poles," and his solicitude for their "liberty" in Polish Prussia, such pretensions would have been the very height of hypocrisy. His scruples, at any rate, if any such existed, were soon dispelled; and he exerted himself in persuading the court of Vienna to enter into the plot.*

Austria was but too ready to fall into the design; the conflicting views, indeed, between Maria Theresa, Joseph, and their minister Kaunitz gave rise to some complication of politics and consequent delay. Frederic, strongly as he is said to have disclaimed the plan in the present instance, was now the only party impatient to conclude it. "The slowness and irresolution of the Russians," he says in his *Mémoires*, "protracted the conclusion of the treaty of partition; the negotiation hung chiefly on the possession of the city of Dantzic. The Russians pretended they had guarantied the liberty of this little republic; but it was in fact the English, who, jealous of the Prussians, protected the liberty of this maritime town,† and who prompted the Empress of Russia

* The nature of a negotiation of such a character as the above rendered it profoundly secret; the principals transacted the business as much as possible without the intervention of agents, and would not, of course, be the persons to expose their own iniquitous proceedings; consequently, much mystery is thrown over the early stages of the plot. Rulhière and all those writers who have had the greatest facilities for investigation agree that the partition was planned at the period of Henry's visit to Petersburg. The above version of the story is taken chiefly from Prince Henry's own statement.—See the "*Souvenirs*," p. 87, in "*Lettres particulières du Baron de Vioménil sur les Affaires de Pologne en 1771 et 1772, &c.*" It differs in a few points from Rulhière's account. *Histoire de l'Anarchie de Pologne*, vol. iv. p. 202.

† The Russians did not merely pretend to have guarantied the liberty of Dantzic. There was a formal treaty signed by Russia, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia, with Dantzic, in 1767, which promised to protect the commerce of that city. The English, too, were bound to interpose in favour of Dantzic, having made similar treaties in 1655 and 1707. These may be seen in the Appendix to "*Letters concerning the Present State of Poland*," by J. Lind. London, 1772.

not to consent to the demands of his Prussian majesty. It was requisite, however, for the king to determine ; and as it was evident that the master of the Vistula and the port of Dantzic would, in time, subject that city, he decided that it was not necessary to stop such an important negotiation, for an advantage *which in fact was only deferred* ; therefore his majesty relaxed in this demand.—After so many obstacles had been removed, this secret contract was signed at Petersburg, 17th Feb. 1772.—The month of June was fixed on for taking possession, and it was agreed that the empress-queen should be invited to join the two contracting powers and share in the partition.”

It now remained to persuade Austria to join the coalition. Joseph and Kaunitz were soon won over, but Maria Theresa's conscience made a longer resistance. The fear of hell, she said, restrained her from seizing another's possessions. It was represented to her, however, that her resistance could not prevent the other two powers from portioning out Poland, but might occasion a war which would cost the valuable lives of many ; whereas the peaceable partition would not spill a drop of blood. She was thus, she imagined, placed in a dilemma between two sins ; and forgetting the command, “do not evil that good may come,” she endeavoured to persuade herself that she was doing her duty in choosing the least. She yielded at length with the air of some religious devotee, who exclaims to her artful seducer, “may God forgive you !” and at the same time sinks into his arms. The contract was signed between Prussia and Austria on the 4th of March, and the definite treaty of partition which regulated the three portions was concluded on the 5th of August, 1772.

Russia was to have, by this first partition, the palatinates of Polock, Witebsk, and Mscislaw, as far as the rivers Dwina and Dnieper, more than 3000 square leagues ; Austria had for her share Red

Russia (Gallicia), and a portion of Podolia and Little Poland as far as the Vistula, about 2500 square leagues; and Prussia was to be contented with Polish Prussia (excepting Dantzic and Thorn with their territory), and part of Great Poland as far as the river Notec (or Netze), comprising about 900 square leagues. All the rest of the kingdom was to be ensured to Stanislas under the old constitution.

All the three powers thought it necessary to publish some defence of their conduct; and, in separate pamphlets, they attempted to prove that they had legitimate claims on Poland, and that their present violent seizures were only just resumptions of their own territory, or equivalent to it.

Rulhière says that Catharine only made her claim as a just indemnification for the trouble and expense which she had devoted to Poland; this, however, it will be found, by referring to her defence,* is not the case. She sets forth the great kindness she had shown the republic by ensuring the election of a Piast (Stanislas), and uses these remarkable words on the subject, "That event was necessary to restore the Polish liberty to its ancient lustre, to ensure the elective right of the monarchy, and to destroy foreign influence, which was so rooted in the state, and which was the continual source of trouble and contest." She then exclaims against the confederates: "Their ambition and cupidity, veiled under the phantom of religion and the defence of their laws, pervade and desolate this vast kingdom, without the prospect of any termination of this madness but its entire ruin." She then proceeds with her "Deduction," endeavouring to prove, from old authors, that it was not till 1686 that the Polish limits were extended beyond the mouth of the Dwina and

* *Exposé de la conduite de la cour imperiale de Russie vis-à-vis de la serenissime Republique de Pologne, avec la deduction des titres sur lesquels elle fonde sa prise de possession d'un equivalent de ses droits et pretentions à la charge de cette puissance. Petersburg, 1773.*

the little town of Stoika on the Dnieper, five miles below Kiow. The following is a specimen of the lawyer-like sophistry which the empress employs to establish her claim to the Russian territory, which remained in the hands of the Poles after the treaty in 1686.* “The design of such a concession being only to put an end to a bloody war more promptly, and by a remedy as violent as a devastation (*aussi violent qu’une devastation*) to ensure tranquillity of neighbourhood between two rival and newly-reconciled nations, it necessarily follows that every act on the part of the subjects of the republic of Poland, contrary to such intention, has, *ipso facto*, revived Russia’s indisputable and unalienated right to all that extent of territory.—It must be observed, also, that this arrangement about the frontier was only provisional and temporary, since it is expressly said, that it shall only remain so *until it has been otherwise amicably settled*. The object was, therefore, to give the nations time to lay aside their inveterate hatred; and to remove immediate causes of dispute between the different subjects, and consequent rupture between the two states. Russia sacrificed for a time the possession of the territory which extends from the fertile town of Stoika to the river Tecmine, and from the right bank of the Dnieper, fifty werstes in breadth along the frontiers of Poland. There is no idea of cession here on the part of Russia; it is a pledge (gage) which she advances for the solidity of the peace, *which ought to be returned to her when the object of it is effected*. This is the only reasonable construction which can be put upon the stipulation, ‘*until it has been otherwise amicably settled*.’ Russia is not to be a loser because the confusion of the internal affairs of Poland has never allowed that country to come to a definite agreement on this subject notwithstanding the requests of Russia.”

* See Rulhière.

It does not demand much acumen to unveil such impudent sophistry as this. The assertion that the arrangement was only provisional and temporary is false; the treaty, indeed, left the detail of the boundary line to be drawn out by commissioners, as must always be the case in arrangements of this kind, and as was meant to be implied by the words which the Russian minister transforms into "*until it has been otherwise amicably arranged.*"

Such was the weak manner in which the Russian diplomatists imagined to deceive Europe; their defence indeed is as triumphant a proof of the badness of their cause as the most earnest friend of Poland could desire. Our surprise may well be excited at the weakness of the argument, particularly when we remember that Catharine's servants had long been trained in glossing over the basest and most shameful transactions; "The ministers of Petersburg," said a contemporary writer,* "are accustomed to appear without blushing at the tribunal of the public in defence of any cause; the death of Peter, and assassination of Prince John, inured them to it." Such a work hardly requires refutation.† Every sophism and every falsehood is a damning argument against the Russian cause. Truth, in fact, is outraged in every page of the writing; and one striking in

* See Letters concerning the Present State of Poland, by J. Lind. London, 1772. These letters, written by one who had such excellent facilities to arrive at information, would be valuable if not debased by a mere cynic's love (ambiguous at the best) for the good cause.

† This will be found, however, in "*Les Droits des trois Puissances Alliées sur plusieurs Provinces de la Republique de Pologne.—Les reflexions d'un gentilhomme Polonais sur les Lettres patentes et pretentions de ces trois Puissances.* Londres, 1774." This work was originally written in Polish by Felix Loyko; it contains an elaborate refutation of all the historical quibbles of the three partitioning powers.

Notwithstanding the force of truth and justice, it is surprising how even some great minds can be warped. Malte Brun makes the following remark in his *Precis de Geographie*. "The partition of Poland was, on the part of Russia, much less an invasion than a reprisal of former invasions. If the Russian manifestoes, in 1772, had developed this historical fact with energy, the pity of Europe for Poland would be considerably lessened."

stance will suffice. Catharine states that the Polish government would never make any arrangement about the frontier; but the fact is, that even as late as 1764 commissioners were appointed at the diet of coronation for this very purpose; but the Russians refused to nominate theirs: again in 1766, when Count Rzewinski, Polish ambassador at Petersburg, made a similar application, he was answered that the affairs of the dissidents must be first settled.

The Austrian pretensions were even more elaborately drawn up than those of Russia. In the first place, the district of Zips, the first sacrifice to Austrian rapacity, came under consideration.* Sigismund, who came to the Hungarian throne in 1387, mortgaged this district to Wladislas II. (Jagellon), King of Poland, in 1412, for a stipulated sum of money.† It is commonly called The Thirteen Towns of Zips, but the district contains sixteen. No reclamation of it had been made till the present time; it had then been in the undisputed possession of Poland nearly 360 years. The chief demur which the Austrians now made to the mortgage was, that the King of Hungary was restricted by the constitution, as expressed in the coronation-oath, from alienating any portion of the kingdom. But even this plea, weak as it is under such circumstances, is not available; since it is proved that this article was never made a part of the coronation-oath until the accession of Ferdinand I. in 1527.

The Austrian minister endeavoured also to establish the right of his mistress to Gallicia and Podolia, as Queen of Hungary, and the dutchies of Oswiecim and Zator,‡ as Queen of Bohemia: "What

* See "Deduction sur l'Hypothèque de Zips, 1773."

† "37,000 soixantaines de gros de Bohême." This sum has been estimated from between 206,360 to 209,440 Polish ducats, present worth.

‡ See "Les Droits de la Couronne de Hongrie sur la Russie-Rouge (Gallicia) et sur la Podolie ainsi que de la Couronne de Bohême sur les Duchés d'Oswiecim et Zator."

lastly establishes indisputably the ancient claim of Hungary to the provinces in question is, that in several seals and documents of the ancient kings of Hungary preserved in our archives, the titles and arms of Galicia are always used." After exhausting the records,* and stating that the crown of Hungary has never in any way renounced its rights and pretensions, the author modestly winds up his arguments in the following way: "Consequently, after such a long delay, the house of Austria is well authorized in establishing and reclaiming the lawful rights and pretensions of her crowns of Hungary and Bohemia, and to obtain satisfaction by the means which she now employs; in the use of which she has exhibited the greatest moderation possible, by confining herself to a very moderate equivalent for her real pretensions to the best provinces of Poland, such as Podolia, &c."

Frederic argues his cause on the general principles of civil law.† "Since, then," he says, "the crown of Poland cannot prove express cessions, which are the only good titles between sovereigns to confer a legitimate possession of disputed provinces, it will perhaps have recourse to prescription and immemorial possession. We all know the famous dispute among the learned on the question of prescription and natural right, whether it obtains between sovereigns and free nations.‡ The affirmative is founded only on that very weak argument,

* The involved arguments and abstruse researches concerning Galicia amount to very little more than the statements,

That Mary, the eldest daughter of Louis (King of Poland and Hungary), whom she succeeded in Hungary, tranquilly possessed Red Russia (Galicia); and

That this kingdom was seized by her sister, Hedwiga, with violence.

† See "Les Droits de sa majesté le Roi de Prusse comme Marquis de Brandeburg sur le duché de Pomerillie (Pomerania) et plusieurs autres Districts du Royaume de Pologne, avec les Pièces Justificatives."

‡ Grotius, Puffendorf, Wolff, &c. have supported the affirmative; Du Puy, Breuning, &c. the negative.

that he who for a long time has not made use of his rights is presumed to have abandoned them; a presumption which is at best doubtful, and cannot destroy the right and established property of a monarch. Besides, even this presumption altogether vanishes when the superior strength of a usurper has prevented the lawful proprietor from claiming his rights, which has been the case in the present instance. Time alone cannot render a possession just which has not been so from its origin; and as there is no judge between free nations, no one can decide if the time past is sufficient to establish prescription, or if the presumption of the desertion (of rights) is sufficiently proved. But even leaving this point undetermined, the prescription which the republic of Poland could allege in the present case has not any of the qualities which the advocates of prescription require, to render it valid between free states.* We do not imagine that our readers will coincide with Frederic in the following opinion: "We flatter ourselves that when the impartial public has weighed without prejudice all that has just been detailed in this exposé, they will not find in the step which his majesty has taken any thing which is not conformable to justice, to natural right, to the general use of nations, and, lastly, to the example which the Poles themselves have given in seizing all these countries by simple matter of fact.† We trust also that the Polish nation will eventually recover from its prejudices; that it will acknowledge the enormous injustice which it has done to the house of Brandenburg, and that it will bring itself to repair it by a just and honourable arrangement with which

* The "Exposé" refers us to Grotius de Jure Bell. et Pacis, lib. ii. c. 4, &c.

† It is hardly requisite to point out the strange and absurd oversight which the learned civilian and politician has committed here. Truth, however, will peep out in spite of all Frederic's cunning. Those half-dozen words obviate the necessity of a formal refutation.

his majesty will willingly comply, sincerely wishing to cultivate the friendship and good-fellowship of this illustrious nation, and to live with the republic in good union and harmony.”*

We have thus given the three monarchs liberty to plead for themselves; and no one can rise from the perusal of their “Defences” without feeling additional conviction of their injustice, and resentment at their hypocrisy. We must own we are almost inclined to interpret Frederic’s appeal as a sneering parody on the cant of diplomacy in general; but, in whatever light it be viewed, it gives additional insight into the heart and head of that military despot and disciple of Machiavelli.†

Iniquity almost always pays virtue the compliment of attempting to assume her semblance; and the three wholesale plunderers, therefore, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, determined to give some show of justice to their violent seizure, by wringing from their victims a ratification of their claims. But “the children of this world” with all their wisdom cannot invariably preserve consistency, and cunning as the villain may sometimes be, he will at some time or other make the most disgraceful mistakes. By requiring further ratification, the three powers

* This and Frederic’s other numerous manifestoes and defences are answered by Felix Loyko in the collection of pamphlets before quoted. He does not forget to remind Frederic that he praises the honour of his father for refusing to seize Polish Prussia, when he was instigated by France to do so in 1734, replying that it would be *unjust*.—See *Mémoires de Brandeburg*.

† Frederic’s character is even yet more deeply implicated, if the following statement is correct; and we have no reason to doubt it. “I can positively assure you, that a member of the diet, who had reluctantly signed the constitution which rejected the demands of the dissidents, and which had been framed and supported by the bishop of Cracow, told the prelate, ‘Your excellency has persuaded us to pass a resolution which cannot fail of bringing on us the resentment of our neighbours.’ The bishop, laying his hand gently on the member’s shoulder, answered, ‘Be persuaded, sir, I should not have counselled you to this step if I had not the most positive assurances from the King of Prussia that he would be harmless in it.’” The author states that this passed in his hearing.—See *Lind’s Letters*, let. ii.

admitted that their anterior claims were not well founded ; and common sense ought to have told them, that if the former claims were not just, the latter, depending on the same title, were rendered still less so by aggravated violence. Every show of justice in a villanous action rises up in sterner judgment against the perpetrator, inasmuch as it evinces design, and makes him responsible for the motive. These remarks might be applied to Catharine, Frederic, Maria Theresa, or Joseph ; for though they may shield themselves from personal accusation by acting under the vague titles of powers, states, or governments, the evasion is mean and cowardly ; for particularly in such despotic governments as theirs the passions and wills of the rulers are the directors of every political scheme.*

The three powers fixed on the 19th of April, 1773, for the opening of a diet at Warsaw to ratify their claims. Their troops were in possession of all Poland ; the capital in particular was strongly invested ; and R  wiski, Benoit, and Stakelberg, the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian ministers, were on the spot to overrule and direct all the debates. They declared that every deputy who opposed their proposals should be treated as an enemy of his country, and of the three powers. Frederic himself states, in his description of this transaction, that the deputies were informed if they continued refractory that the whole kingdom would be dismembered ; but, on the contrary, that if they were submissive the foreign troops would evacuate by degrees the territory they intended to leave to the republic. The diet was to be confederated, that the Poles might be deprived of their last resource, the *liberum veto*.

* S  gur says, and it has been said a hundred times before, that " We may solve nearly all the enigmas of politics by first studying both the good and bad qualities of those who direct them ; for the passions and weaknesses of governors always have more influence on events than the interests of the governed."— *D  cade Historique ou Tableau Politique de l'Europe depuis 1786-1792*, par M. Le Comte de S  gur.

Some few patriots still raised their voices, even in the midst of the united armies of Russia, Austria, and Prussia; and among these Reyten was the most distinguished. He was a Lithuanian by descent, had acted a good part in the confederacy of Bar, and had earned a character which made the electors of Nowogrodek select him for their representative in the present memorable diet. His colleague was Samuel Korsak, a worthy coadjutor, who did not turn a deaf ear to his father's parting words: "My son, I send you to Warsaw accompanied by my oldest domestics; I charge them to bring me your head, if you do not oppose with all your might what is now plotting against your country."

Poninski, a creature of the allied powers, was the marshal of the diet, appointed by the intervention of the ambassadors; and when the session opened, one of the deputies nominated him, and he was immediately proceeding to take the seat, without waiting for the election, but several members rose to protest against this breach of privilege, and Reyten exclaimed, "Gentlemen, the marshal cannot be thus self-appointed; the whole assembly must choose him; I protest against the nomination of Poninski: name him who is to be your president." Some voices instantly shouted, "Long live the true son of his country, Marshal Reyten." Poninski retired, adjourning the session to the next day.

On the following morning Poninski again made his appearance, merely to postpone the assembly one day more. When this period arrived, he went to the hall with a guard of foreign soldiers, to station some of his faction at the doors, and to prevent the entrance of the public. Reyten, Corsak, and their little band of patriots were soon at their posts, when Reyten, perceiving that the people were not allowed to enter, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, follow me. Poninski shall not be marshal of the diet to-day, if I live!" It was already twelve o'clock, and Poninski

did not appear, but a messenger arrived to state that he adjourned the meeting. "We do not acknowledge Poninski for marshal," replied Reyten; and seeing many of the members about to retire, he placed himself before the door with his arms crossed, and attempted to stop the deserters. But his exertions proving useless, he threw himself along the doorway, exclaiming, with a wearied but determined voice, "Go, go, and seal your own eternal ruin, but first trample on the breast which will only beat for honour and liberty!" There were now only fifteen members in the hall, and of these but six persevered in their patriotic determination; namely, Reyten, Korsak, Durin, Terzmanowski, Kozuchowski, and Penczkowski. At ten a message arrived from the Russian ambassador, inviting the noncontent deputies to a conference at his house. Four of them, among whom was Korsak, accordingly went; and Stackelberg at first addressed them mildly, but finding them resolute, began to threaten them with confiscation of their estates. On this Korsak rose, and declared, since they wished to seize his possessions, which were already, however, mostly plundered by the Russian armies, there was no occasion for so many preliminaries; and he actually put into his hand a list of all his property, adding, "This is all I have to sacrifice to the avarice of the enemies of my country. I know that they can also dispose of my life; but I do not know any despot on earth rich enough to corrupt or powerful enough to intimidate me."

Reyten remained still at his post, and the four patriots on returning found the doors closed, and lay down without for the night. On the following day the ministers of the three powers repaired to the king's palace, and Stackelberg threatened him with the immediate destruction of his capital, unless he gave his sanction to the forced confederation. Stanislas demanded the advice of his council, but re-

ceived no reply; and taking their silence for an assent, and not knowing how to evade a direct answer, he yielded to the ministers' demands. The corrupt diet held their assembly without the hall, because Reyten was still at his post;— such was their dread of even one patriotic individual. On the 23d of April, when Poninski and the confederates entered, they found Reyten stretched senseless on the floor, in which state he must have lain thirty-six hours. Such was the determination with which he resisted the oppression of his country; and so entirely were all the energies of his mind devoted to the cause, that when he learned its fall, he lost his reason.*

The allies began to redouble their threats, and signified to the deputies their intention of portioning out the whole of the kingdom, if any more opposition were offered; but, notwithstanding, the diet continued stormy, and many bold speeches were made. Of all situations the king's must have been the most perplexing and irksome; but no person was better adapted to act such a part than Stanislas. He made the most pathetic appeals to his subjects, and frequently spoke in a strain more fit for an unfortunate but patriotic hero, than for one who had done nothing but affect a few tears (for we can hardly doubt that they were hypocritical) over the misfortunes which he had brought on his country. The following sentence must have sounded strangely in his mouth:

* When Poninski informed Reyten that the ministers had condescended to set aside the sentence of outlawry against him, and besides offered him 2000 ducats to defray his travelling expenses to whatever country he chose to retire, the stanch constitutionalist answered, "I have with me 5000 ducats; I make you an offer of them, provided you will resign the marshal's staff, and with it corruption and dishonour." One of the Prussian generals who was present, struck with the disinterestedness of the patriot, exclaimed, *Optime vir, gratulor tibi: optime rem tuam egisti.* This truly great man, in one of his violent fits of insanity, brought on by distress at the fate of his country, one day seized a glass from which he had been drinking, broke it to pieces with his teeth, and swallowing the fragments, expired on the 8th of August, 1790.

"*Fecimus quæ potuimus, omnia. tentavimus, nihil omisimus.*"* Again, on the 10th of May he absolutely had the audacity to defend his political conduct, stating, that "He had always done his duty whenever any business depended on him."†

On the 17th of May the diet agreed to Poninski's motion, to appoint a commission that, in conjunction with the three ambassadors, should regulate the limits of the four countries, and determine upon the changes in the Polish government. On the 18th the commissioners were nominated by the king and Poninski.

Some small remains of liberty lingered even among the commissioners, and called for fresh threats and violence from the allied powers. At length they agreed to ratify the treaty of the 5th of August, and establish a permanent council, in whom the executive power was to be vested. This council consisted of forty members, and was divided into four departments, which engrossed every branch of administration. The king was the nominal president, but the real authority was possessed by the Russian ambassador.

The partition was not fully arranged till 1774, and then Prussia and Austria began to extend their bounds beyond the agreed limits. *L'appetit vient en mangeant*, and these encroachments were a sad augury of future partitions to the Poles.

The indifference with which other states regarded this partition was indeed surprising. France, in particular, might have been expected to protest against it; but the imbecility and dotage of Louis XV., and the weakness of his minister, paid too little attention to the interests of their own nation to be likely to think of others. They made the most frivolous excuses, and even had the meanness to attempt to shift the blame on the shoulders of their ambas-

* Discours du Roi, prononcé à la Diète le 5 Mai, 1773.

† Discours du Roi à la Diète, 10 Mai, 1773.

sador at Vienna, pretending that he amused himself with hunting, instead of politics, and had no knowledge of the design of partition until it was consummated. Louis contented himself with saying, with an affectation of rage, "It would not have happened if Choiseul had been here!" Some few patriots in England declaimed on the injustice of the proceeding; but the spirit of the ministry, which was occupied in wrangling with the American colonies about the imposition of taxes, was not likely to be very attentive to the cries of oppressed liberty.

The partition is not one of those equivocal acts which seem to vibrate between right and wrong, justice and injustice, and demand the most accurate analysis to ascertain on which side they preponderate. Argument is thrown away on such a subject; for to doubt about the nature of a plain decisive act like this, must necessarily proceed from something even worse than uncertainty and skepticism concerning the simple fundamental principles of moral action. A little reflection, however, will not be lost on so memorable a portion of history, which opens a wider field for instruction than the "thousand homilies" on the ambition, and glory, and other commonplaces of Greek and Roman history. Such great political crimes reveal a corresponding system of motives of as black a hue, and even the narrowest experience teaches us that motives are never so well traced as in their results. The corrupt principle which prompts injustice and deceit in foreign transactions would operate equally in domestic affairs; and the minister who uses hypocrisy and falsehood in manifestoes and treaties would not scruple to do the same in matters of private life. An implicit confidence in enemies like these was one of the amiable "crimes" for which "Sarmatia fell unwept."

CHAPTER X.

State of Poland—Stanislas proposes a Reform—Diet of 1788, or Constitutional Diet—Alliance with Prussia—Constitution of the 3d of May—Irresolution of Stanislas—Treachery of Frederic William—Opposition of Russia to the Polish Reform—Confederacy of Targowica—Frederic William's Letter to Stanislas—The Russians enter Poland—Irresolution of Stanislas—The Prussians enter Poland—Frederic's Manifesto—Opposition of the Confederates to Russia overcome—Frederic's Claims—Tyranny of Sievers—Concession of the Diet—Second Partition.

THE adverse fate of the confederacy of Bar had exhausted most of Poland's best blood, and the galling Russian yoke had broken her few choice surviving spirits; so that this once proud and gallant nation was bent as supinely and submissively to its despots as if their domination had been founded on the rock of ages. But the free spirit of inquiry, which had gone forth during the latter part of the last reign, could not be confined by Russian chains, and it soon roused many minds from their disgraceful lethargy. The exertions of Konarski had long weakened the influence of the Jesuits, and even the few remains of conventual superstition were swept away, in 1773, by Pope Clement's famous bull, which pronounced the suppression of that powerful order. The same diet which had sealed the fatal treaty of partition had appropriated the revenues of the Jesuits to the purpose of national education, and at the same time established a commission to superintend this important work. This excellent institution served to counteract the demoralizing effects of foreign subjugation; the "medicine of the mind" was universally administered; the national literature was strenuously cultivated; every young Pole now studied the history of his country; and the pre-

ceptor finished his lectures on the story of patriotism, with the stirring monition, "Go thou and do likewise!"

All these causes pressed forward the Poles in that march of improvement which it is now our pleasing office to record. In the diet of 1776 the king himself urged the necessity of revising the constitution; and proposed Zamoyski, the patriotic chancellor, whose memorable resignation, in 1767, was yet fresh in their memory, as the proper person to undertake the task. The proposal was received with universal applause, and Zamoyski laid his new code before the diet in 1780. He recommended the abolition of those two fatal privileges, the *liberum veto*, and election of the monarch; another equally important scheme was the emancipation of the serfs; the trading classes also were to be raised to a share in the government, by having the right of electing deputies for the diet; commerce was to be encouraged; and, in short, Poland was to overtake the other states of Europe in civilization. Zamoyski had himself set the example of emancipating his serfs on his lands in Biezun, thus giving them an interest in the welfare of the country. He was imitated by the king's nephew, Stanislas Poniatowski, and other nobles; but the generality of the Polish nobility were more short-sighted to their real advantage, and Russian policy backed them in their opposition to this liberal and politic design; so that not only was the new constitution rejected in the diet of 1780, but Zamoyski was pronounced by most of the voices a traitor to his country. This attempt, though unsuccessful, was not without its good effects.

The king still cherished the scheme, but fearing the interference of Russia, he obtained from Catharine, with whom he had an interview in her progress to the Crimea in May, 1787, a solemn promise that she would not make his proposed changes the plea for another invasion. The Emperor of Austria, who

also visited Catharine, made him a similar assurance. In August of the same year war breaking out between Russia and Turkey, Catharine suggested an offensive and defensive alliance with Poland. This offer was referred to the diet of the next year.

In the mean time Frederic William, successor of his uncle Frederic the Great, was plotting with England, Holland, and Sweden, against Russia and Austria, and pretended to the Poles that he attached much importance to their friendship. As an inducement to detach them from Russia, he, so far from opposing the change in the constitution, gave it his full approval. The diet was convoked for the 30th of September, 1788, and was confederated, which emancipated it from the shackles of the *liberum veto*; and on the 12th of October the Prussian minister presented to the diet a memorial protesting against the league with Russia against Turkey, and offered the alliance of Prussia in its room. The diet returned for answer, that they had no intention of entering into any offensive alliance with Russia.

The diet at the same time proceeded in their work of independence; they decreed the increase of the army to 100,000 men, and established a commission of war, which was to be entirely independent of the king or the council. They also demanded that the Russian troops should immediately evacuate the kingdom. This called forth a protest from the Russian minister, stating, that "he must regard the least change in the constitution of 1775 as a violation of the treaties." The Prussian ambassador, on the contrary, assured them, that his master would not interfere in any of their arrangements, or control their deliberations. The ordinary duration of the diet was now almost expired, and they decreed to prolong it indefinitely; an innovation which gave the Russians fresh umbrage.

The Poles were for some time wavering between Russia and Prussia. On one side it was urged, that

it was folly to set the former at open defiance, while they were so entirely at her mercy, and that "with the protection of Russia they could reform their constitution, and render their political existence firmer, and, perhaps, recover one-third of the possessions which they had lost." On the other hand, the opposite party argued the advantages of the Prussian alliance, at once ensuring a new constitution and protection from Russia. Credulity has ever been a Polish weakness; and none but a Pole would have thought of Russian restitution, or have trusted to the protection of Frederic William. It is amusing to hear how seriously the Poles talk of the importance of their alliance. "All these powers," says Count Oginski,* speaking of Prussia and her allies, "which agreed in principles, found that it was necessary to comprehend Poland in this new league," &c. No doubt Poland would have served for "a barrier to the ambition of Russia," that is, might have received for a short time the blows intended for Prussia, as a reward for its fidelity to Frederic William. This king's aim had long been to obtain possession of Thorn and Dantzic, that the commerce of the Vistula might be entirely at his mercy. Aware, however, that the Poles would not willingly part with these towns, he ordered his ambassador, Lucchesini, to hint his wish, but to state also that he did not make it an essential article of the treaty. Other reasons biassed the Poles against Russia. She of the three dividing states was the most hateful to Poland; her ministers still domineered there, her troops still plundered and insulted the inhabitants, while the Prussians had left them without rankling the wounds they had made. The Prussian ambassador at Warsaw further inflamed this hostile feeling, by affecting to tell, as a confidential communication, "That Russia had proposed to the King of

* Vol. i. p. 29.

Poland to put him in possession of Great Poland if he would remain neuter in the war against the Turks." The lie passed from mouth to mouth with full belief; the alliance with Prussia was decreed by the diet on the 15th of March, 1790, and the treaty of commerce was the next subject of debate.

Now that Frederic William had enticed the Poles to throw off the yoke of Russia, which they would hardly have dared to do had they not depended on his sanction and that of his allies, his end was answered. He began to talk more decidedly about the cession of Thorn and Dantzic. He knew the Poles had gone too far to retract and make their peace with Russia; and that in case of a termination of the Turkish war, Catharine would punish their revolt by further confiscation, in which case Frederic must have a pretext for seizing these two towns. He says in his letter to Stanislas, dated the 11th of August, 1790, "I have no objection to a discussion of the existing treaty of commerce, or the conclusion of a new one, foreseeing with certainty that it will be acknowledged that the proposal which I have made (the cession of Thorn and Dantzic) to compensate me for a considerable loss of my customs, *is and always will be the only just and practicable way* to render the commerce of the Polish nation as flourishing as possible," &c. The Poles were naturally averse to yield the commerce of the Vistula entirely into the hands of Prussia; and instructed their ambassadors to the various courts in alliance with Prussia to endeavour to set aside the demand. All these attempts were useless;* Dantzic and Thorn

* Pitt, the English minister, expressed himself very decidedly on this point to Count Oginski, the Polish ambassador. "What advantage," he said to that nobleman, "do you derive from these two outlets for your productions in the state of weakness in which you are at present groaning under the protection of the court of Petersburg? The King of Prussia, in offering you his friendship and a treaty of alliance, presents you with the means of escaping from this abject state, and that alone would be worth the expense of making the few sacrifices they require

must be the price of the commercial treaty.* Notwithstanding the Poles felt this, the diet in the early part of 1791 decreed that no portion of the states of the republic was ever to be alienated. They thus deprived themselves even of the show of protection from Prussia, and undertook to make all these proposed changes entirely on their own responsibility.

The diet, however, proceeded boldly in their work of reform. In April, 1791, the towns were admitted to the elective franchise; the absurd authority of the dietines was abolished, excepting when in a change of the civil or criminal laws; the *liberum veto* was abrogated, unanimity in the diets being no longer required, but a plurality of votes was decreed sufficient in general matters, while, for declarations of war, treaties, &c. three-fourths of the votes were requisite, and for taxes, &c. two-thirds. But the 3d of May was the grand day which was to give birth to the new constitution. The articles had been long in preparation, and the king now expressed his full sanction of the measure. The reformers were well aware that there still remained some enemies to the proposed change; and though the 5th of May was the day proposed, they altered it to the 3d, that they might anticipate any coalition of the opponents.

On the grand day thousands of spectators thronged the royal castle of Warsaw, where the diets are held, to witness the fine spectacle of a nation throwing off the trammels of an antiquated and absurd legislature. After the patriotic Marshal Malachowski had addressed the assembly in terms appropriate to the solemnity of the occasion, he proposed that the report of the commission for foreign affairs should be read.

of you, and which the court of Berlin proposes to you as the condition of entering into a treaty of commerce with Poland."—*Mémoires de Michel Oginski*, tom. i.

* Ségur says, that after the convention of Reichenbach, "Frederic William spoke no more of Dantzic and Thorn," vol. i. p. 296. He must mean as a compensation for the possessions which Austria was to retain by the treaty with Turkey.

The object was to display the sinister designs of Russia, and the consequent necessity of using the most enlightened policy to counteract them. When this startling document had been gone through, Potocki called on the king, as the only person who was unfettered by party jealousy, to devise the most efficacious means to save the country.

Stanislas rose, and declared that the only mode to preserve the kingdom from the dangers to which the abuses of its legislature had exposed it was by abolishing all those abuses, and establishing immediately a new and solid constitution. He added, that, having been convinced of this a long time, he had prepared a plan which he would submit to the assembly.

The new constitution called forth some passionate invectives from the opposition members, but the reformers far outnumbered their opponents, and Zabiello, a Livonian deputy, called on the king and the diet to take an oath of adherence to the constitution immediately. The proposal was received with shouts of applause; the king ordered the bishop of Cracow to administer the oath to him, and afterward added, "I have sworn, and I will never swerve from it. I call on all those who love their country to follow me to the church to take the same oath." He then proceeded to the cathedral, followed by all the diet except twelve members; and all the bishops, ministers, senators, and deputies repeated the solemn oath to support the constitution.

The principal articles were as follows:

The Catholic religion was to remain that of the state; all other sects were tolerated, but the king was to be a Roman Catholic.

The eligibility of the throne was abolished, and the family of Saxony was to be called to the succession on the death of Stanislas. The executive power was intrusted to the king and his council composed of six ministers, who could be deprived of their office by a majority in the diet. While the diets were not

sitting, the king was to have the power of making treaties, &c. The regulations of the 18th of April concerning the deputies of the citizens were confirmed. The *liberum veto* and all confederacies were abolished entirely, and it was agreed that a revision of the constitution was to take place every twenty-fifth year.

Congratulations poured in upon Stanislas from almost all the courts of Europe; and even the pope was among the number of congratulators. The politicians in England were enthusiastic in their admiration of the new constitution. "It is a work," said Fox, "in which every friend to reasonable liberty must be sincerely interested." "Humanity," exclaimed Burke, "must rejoice and glory when it considers the change in Poland!" Frederic William testified his approbation of the proceeding in his letter to the king, dated the 23d of May. Among other things, he says, "I congratulate myself on having had it in my power to contribute to maintain the liberty and independence of the Polish nation, and one of my most pleasing cares will be to support and draw closer the bond which unites us."

Notwithstanding the ardour of Stanislas in the work of reform, those who were acquainted with his character felt the greatest apprehensions about his determination. He burst into tears one day, on hearing that such fears existed, and assured his auditors "that those persons were much mistaken about him; that he had always been unfortunate, but never guilty towards the nation; that his conduct would belie the bad opinion entertained of him, and that no human force could shake the sentiments he professed, and would manifest, in exposing his life, if it were necessary, to support the constitution, and consolidate the happiness of Poland."

Although Frederic William joined the other princes in congratulations to Stanislas, on his important reform in the constitution, his heart did not go with

them. His politics were undergoing a complete change; and his mind, naturally tortuous, readily glided through the ever-winding paths of events which sprung up at this time in such confusion. The death of the emperor Joseph, in January, 1790, was one of these important circumstances. His successor, Leopold, found his throne tottering to the very foundation, and gladly availed himself of Frederic's hatred to exertion, to avert a Prussian inroad, and obtain peace.* A treaty was concluded between the two powers at Reichenbach, on the 27th of July, 1790, including Turkey. This treaty had the most important influence on the politics of Europe generally; and Poland, being almost the focus for the intrigues of the three adjacent courts, experienced their effects in the highest degree. Russia, abandoned by Austria, found it expedient to make peace, which she did with Sweden, within eighteen days after the convention of Reichenbach. Although the sultan had one enemy the less, he also was inclined to a cessation of war, since at best he could only aim at making the least disadvantageous peace: this seemed the critical moment, before Russia recovered from her alarm; and the treaty was concluded between Catharine and the Porte, at Jassy, on the 4th of August, 1791. Russia was thus set at liberty to turn her attention to Poland, almost at the very crisis when Frederic had grown less than lukewarm in their cause, and Leopold had not had time to forget that it had been allied against him. The French revolution, too, which burst out about this time, had the highest influence on the fate of Poland: dangers drew the monarchs of Europe more closely together, and they now more than ever dreaded the name of reform. The prudence and uprightness of Leopold, however, acted for some time as a check to Frederic William's versatility and treachery: but this was removed by

* The motives which changed Frederic's political views may be seen in Ségur's *Decade Historique*, vol. i. p. 289.

the emperor's death, on the 1st of March, 1792. Even if the King of Prussia had been honest in his promises to Poland, his alarm at the revolutionary proceedings in France would have prevented him from performing them in defiance of Russia, that he might be at liberty to attempt to crush the nascent spirit of independence in France. All the negotiations between the three powers were now veiled in the closest secrecy; but time has since shown, that Catharine made private and distinct arrangements with Prussia and Austria, to prevent any opposition to her designs on Poland.

On the 16th of April, 1792, the deputation for the management of foreign affairs laid an official notice before the diet concerning the hostile preparations of Russia. Notwithstanding this, the diet went on boldly in their work of reform; and the 3d of May, the anniversary of the new constitution, was set apart for public rejoicing. But some gloomy presentiments imbittered all the festivity; Felix Potocki, Branicki, and Rzewinski, the three chief nobles who opposed the reform, although apparently isolated from the rest of the Poles, had been endeavouring secretly to make converts, and had been during some time at Jassy, an omen that boded no good. The diet invested the king with full executive power, placing the army entirely at his orders, and allowing him to employ foreign engineers. They also ordered thirty millions of money to be placed at his disposal, should war break out, and gave him liberty to convoke the *pospolite*, in case the army of 100,000 men was not sufficient.

News shortly arrived that the recusant nobles had signed an act of confederacy at Targowica,* on the 14th of May; and four days after, the Russian minister presented a protest from his mistress, against the innovations, promising to pardon all those who would

* They could only muster thirteen.

renounce them, but threatening all who refused to do so. Although this declaration of war, for such it was, must have been expected by all the thinking Poles, they had no doubt hoped for some fortunate event to avert the blow : and, ever credulous, some still depended on Frederic William. This monarch, however, soon undeceived them ; for in answer to the king's letter of the 31st of May, he says, "I will frankly confess, that after all that had passed during the last year, it was easy to foresee the difficulties in which the King of Poland now finds himself involved. On more than one occasion, the Marquis of Lucchesini has been commissioned to communicate my fears on that point, as well to your majesty as the leading members of the government. Since the time when the re-establishment of the general tranquillity in Europe has allowed explanation, and since the Empress of Russia has evinced a decided opposition to the revolution of the 3d of May, my way of thinking and the language of my ministers have never varied. While I viewed with a calm eye the new constitution which the republic has made for itself with my approval and concurrence, I never thought of supporting it, or protecting it.

"Your majesty will feel that, the state of things having entirely changed since the alliance I contracted with you, and that the present conjunctures, produced by the constitution of the 3d of May, not being conformable to the engagements which were stipulated, it is not my part to comply with the expectations of your majesty."*

We hardly dare to allow ourselves to express our feelings on reading this letter, but prefer to give the opinion of one who had more experience in the unworthy tricks of politicians. "We have often seen," says Count Ségur, "justice sacrificed to ambition in politics, but never have politicians allowed themselves

* See Ségur's *Decade*, vol. ii. p. 388.

to disown engagements so public, so recent, and to sport so openly with the faith of treaties.”*

On the 18th of May the Russian army, consisting of 80,000 troops of the line and 20,000 Cossacks, received their orders to enter Poland. The Polish army consisted of three divisions, one headed by the king's nephew, Joseph Poniatowski, the second by Michael Wielhorski, and the third by the famous Kosciusko. Stanislas promised to put himself at the head of his troops, and the Poles in general looked forward with sanguine hopes. Those, however, who knew the king had no such expectations,† and were not surprised when he formed a new council of war, and ordered Joseph Poniatowski to retire towards the river Bug, in order to concentrate the forces about Warsaw. Several skirmishes occurred, in which the Poles had, in general, the advantage.

Kosciusko had a glorious affair at Zielence, on the 18th of June; and Mokranowski distinguished himself at Polonna, at the head of his cavalry. But the battle of Dubienka was the most decisive affray in this short and tantalizing campaign. Headed by Kosciusko, the Poles withstood an enemy three times their number, and made an honourable retreat, after much slaughter. The courage and prudence exhibited by Kosciusko on this day marked him out to the Poles as one of their greatest military champions. In Lithuania the army was restricted by similar orders, and the Russians advanced almost unopposed.

Notwithstanding his timid counsels, the king continued to act the hero at least in words, and frequently exclaimed, with enthusiasm, “that he would

* By the 6th article of the treaty of 1790, Frederic William was bound to protect the republic from foreign interference, “at any time or in any manner.”—*Ségur's Decade Historique*, vol. ii.

† The Poles, it must be confessed, showed the most tender regard to the divine person of their king. “I do not speak,” says Oginski, “of the design which it is said he formed to repair to the camp of Dubno, where a body of 12,000 men were assembled; for this enterprise would have cost too many sacrifices of his peaceful habits.”—*Mém. de Michel Oginski*, vol. i. p. 180.

rather die gloriously than betray the confidence of his nation, and sacrifice the interest of his subjects." Every day, however, gave the lie to this assertion, and his irresolution was hourly exhibited more glaringly.

Of this his observation on reading a spirited protest of the Lithuanians against the traitorous confederacy is a striking exemplification: "It is well, very well; but are they not afraid of compromising themselves, and exposing themselves to persecution, if chances happened to turn out against us?" This short remark speaks his real sentiments. On the 22d of June he wrote to the empress, offering to make the grand-duke Constantine his successor; but he only received reproaches for having violated the *pacta conventa*, and a palpable hint to join the confederation of Targowica. On the 23d of July the king signed the act of the confederates, and Poland was once more in the hands of the Russians. The patriot officers were discharged; the army was disbanded, or scattered in small detachments, and the inhabitants of the various districts were obliged to accede to the confederation, and declare that all the proceedings of the constitutional diet were acts of despotism. The latter part of this year was spent in making these arrangements, and negotiating with the confederates.

Early in 1793 the Prussian troops entered Great Poland. The confederates, whose commissioners now sat at Grodno, in vain remonstrated with the Russian minister; their only answer was, that he was ignorant of the designs of Frederic William, but they must take care not to incense that prince by imprudent hostilities, without having previously consulted the court of Russia. The confederates, at least all those who were not mere creatures of Catharine, now began to repent their rashness, and they issued a protestation, on the 3d of February, against the Prussian invasion, wound up with these

words: "We will preserve our republic whole, or none of us will survive our disaster."

To add to the calamities of Poland, the richest bankers of Warsaw, in whose hands capitalists had vested immense sums, declared themselves insolvent. This shock was severely felt by the greatest portion of the moneyed Poles; for the bankers, by giving as high a rate of interest as seven or eight per cent., were the holders of most of the capital.

On the 25th of March Frederic issued a manifesto, stating openly his intention of seizing Great Poland,* and assigning as motives for this treachery and disregard of his former treaties, that the principles of jacobinism were gaining ground fast in that country; "that the spirit of French democracy and the principles of that atrocious sect, which seeks to make proselytes on all sides, begin to take deep root in Poland, so that the manœuvres of the jacobin emissaries are powerfully supported there, and that there are already formed there several revolutionary clubs, which make an open profession of their sentiments."† He admits that he had previously concerted this invasion with the courts of Vienna and Petersburg; that he intends to incorporate several

* Oginski commits some egregious blunders in this part of his Memoirs. He quotes Frederic's manifesto of the 25th of March, "It is known by all Europe," &c., as one dated the 16th of January.

It is evident the count never read the original, for he makes the sentence "*Le Roi aime*," &c. the termination, whereas it is in the middle. He says also that Dantzic is not named in this manifesto; whereas we find, "In consequence, we have resolved, in concert with her majesty the empress of all the Russias, to take possession of the districts above named, *as well as of the towns of Thorn and Dantzic, and to incorporate them in our states*," &c.—See Appendix to Ségur.

† As these singular documents are of great importance, we will transcribe a few striking clauses. After stating that he has ordered his troops to enter Poland, he proceeds, "He flatters himself, that with feelings so pacific, he may depend on the good-will of a nation whose welfare can never be indifferent to him, and to which he wishes to give *real proofs of his affection and regard*." To add the last step to this climax of galling insult, he orders all the inhabitants, "under penalty of the punishment customary in such cases of refusal," to take an oath of allegiance to himself and his successors.

districts of Great Poland and the towns of Thorn and Dantzic with his states, promising, at the same time, to maintain all the inhabitants in their possessions, privileges, and rights, secular and ecclesiastic.

The empress ordered her minister, Sievers, to concert with the envoy of Prussia, Bucholz, the partition of the kingdom; and on the 9th of April they laid before the commissioners of the confederates at Grodno a declaration, involving the destiny of Poland. After having formerly stated that they only came as allies of the majority of the nation, they now complain that "the spirit of faction and discontent has spread to such a great extent, that those who give themselves the trouble of fomenting it and rendering it general, having failed in their intrigues with foreign courts to attach suspicion to the designs of Russia, have directed all their efforts to fascinate the eyes of the people, always easy to seduce. They have succeeded so far that this same people, after being frustrated in their criminal designs, have become the sharers in the hatred and enmity which they have vowed against the empire of Russia. Without mentioning here several facts generally known, and which prove the hostile inclinations of the greatest part of the Poles, it will suffice to say that they have abused the principles of humanity and moderation which directed the generals and officers of the army of her majesty the empress in their operations and in their conduct, according to the empress's orders given them in this particular; so that they had risen against them in every way, ill treating them, turning them into ridicule, and the boldest among them have even dared to speak of the Sicilian Vespers, threatening them with the same fate." They state that they have the consent of Austria to limit the extent of Poland, and invite the Poles to a diet, to co-operate with them in making this arrangement.

The ministers obliged the confederated commission

to re-establish the permanent council which had been instituted in 1775, which was so readily made an instrument of Russia, and which had been abolished by the reformers. They also urged the king and his new council to convoke the diet immediately at Grodno; but before issuing the circular letters for the election, Stanislas resolved to try his personal influence with Catharine, and offered at the same time to abdicate the throne. To this proposal she replied, through her minister, that the moment he chose for abdication was the least opportune; and that all considerations of propriety required him to retain the reins of authority in his hands until he had extricated the kingdom from its present troubles.

To ensure a majority in the diet, the ministers obliged the commission of the confederacy to pass a temporary law, called *sancitum*, dated the 11th of May, that those should not be eligible who had not acceded to the confederacy, or had concurred in the establishment of the new constitution. To make security still more sure, another *sancitum* was passed, which extended the restriction to all who had protested against any of the commissioners' decisions. To enforce these laws Russian garrisons were placed in all the places appointed for the dietines.

The king was now as imbecile as ever; and his answer to Count Oginski's proposal to plan a determined resistance is a sad omen of his conduct. "God is witness," said he, "of the purity of the intentions of my heart; I have nothing to reproach myself with; the misfortunes which overwhelm Poland consume me with grief, and shorten my days, without a possibility of my being able to be useful to it.—Under any other circumstances Count Oginski's project would be very good; but, to sum up our calculation, what result would be produced by this rhodomontade on my part, which does not suit either my age or my strength, exhausted by labours and

perpetual vexations?" He opened this fatal diet on the 17th of June, by announcing his fears for the fate of his country, and recommending negotiation as the only means of procuring any alleviation of their troubles. The Russian and Prussian ministers sent a note to the assembly, requiring them to comply with the demands contained in the manifesto of the 29th of March. The diet, although so artfully picked by Russia, was not at first very tractable; some little portion of patriotism found its way into it in spite of the care and scrutiny employed. Sievers, Catharine's minister, demanded that the treaty should be signed on the 17th of July; and this announcement, which brought the Poles face to face with the destiny preparing for them, roused even the most listless. "They threaten us with *Siberia*," said the deputies; "those deserts will not be without charms for us; every thing there will recall the cause of our country to our minds! Well, let us go to *Siberia*! Conduct us there, sire! There your virtue and ours will make our enemies tremble!" At this exclamation, a part of the assembly rose spontaneously, crying out, "Yes, let us go to *Siberia*! Let us ~~set~~ *set* out!" After this burst of enthusiasm, Karski, deputy for Płock, having in his eye some who did not, he knew, share in this patriotic feeling, declared that "if there was any one in that hall who dared to sanction the treaty, he would be the first to teach him what fate a traitor deserves." Misfortune, remarks *Ségur*, has its intoxication as well as happiness. The king was highly alarmed at these remains of patriotism, and exhorted the diet to comply with the demands of the ministers. The bishop of Livonia exerted all his powers of artifice as well as oratory to induce them to submit; he assured them that "when the Empress of Russia was satisfied, she would not insist on the cession of the provinces which the King of Prussia had invaded; and, consequently, by making the concessions to Russia they

would avoid those which Prussia required." The ardour of these credulous patriots was soon cooled; the motion passed with a majority of seventy-three voices against twenty, and, after a few days' debate on the several articles, the sad and disgraceful treaty was signed on the 23d of July. On the following day the Prussian minister demanded concessions, similar to those just made, in *his* master's name.

But, humiliated as the Poles were, they could not stifle their indignation at Frederic William's treachery; he it was, they said, who, by his deceitful promises, had urged them to rebel against the tyranny of Russia; he was the Satan, exclaimed they, who tempted us to eat the forbidden fruit of liberty, and now he not only laughs at our misfortune, but is one of the instruments to inflict it. They could not forget how warmly he had expressed his approval of all the reforms he now complained of. He could not erase from their remembrance the letter he had written to his ambassador at Warsaw, Count Goltz: "In conformity with the friendly feeling which has always led me to co-operate for the prosperity of the republic as well as to consolidate its new constitution, a feeling of which I have never failed to give every proof in my power, I admire and applaud the *important step** which the nation has taken, and which I consider essential to consolidate its welfare.—I request you to present, in the most solemn manner, my sincere congratulations to the king, to the marshals of the diet, and all those who have contributed to such an important work." But imprecations were now the only instruments of Polish vengeance, and we have already had frequent opportunities of seeing the efficiency of the Poles in this as in other species of warfare. The king, the butt of all parties, occasionally threw a dash of his theatrical pathos into the scene, protesting his innocence of the misfortunes of

* The choice of the Elector of Saxony for successor to Stanislas.

his country ; and the diet absolutely had the patience, on many occasions, to hear him exclaim, " We have done all that lay in our power, we have made every attempt, and we have omitted nothing ! " * But when he urged the deputies to ratify the treaty, their forbearance was exhausted : they told him some hard truths ;—that he was only the instrument of Catharine to tyrannize and oppress the Poles ; that had he not paralyzed their arms in the campaign of 1792, they might now be enjoying their liberty, or at least the satisfaction of having done their duty.

This was only a procrastination of the evil day ; Russian despotism, which at home knew no other law but " to say to this man go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh," was not mollified by migrating a few miles farther to the west ; and on the 22d of September Sievers sent another declaration to the diet to insist on the immediate ratification of the treaty, and finished this note by announcing his intention, that, to prevent all disorder, he should order two battalions of grenadiers, with four pieces of artillery, to surround the castle where the diet was held. No strangers except the Russian officers, who were strictly charged to prevent the deputies even from moving from their seats, were to be admitted. At the same time, said Sievers, he ensured the deputies a perfect freedom of debate ! Even then the diet would not submit without reservation to the demands of Russia. Surrounded as they were with the sworn slaves of Catharine, some few members still raised their voices against this prostitution of the forms of liberty.

Russian patience was exhausted ; on the same night four members, who had distinguished themselves by their patriotism, were dragged from their homes by Russian soldiers ; and it was in vain that the diet protested against the violence. Sievers

* *Fecimus quæ potuimus, omnia tentavimus, nihil omisimus*, were his words.

even still had the effrontery to say, that "he had never pretended to curb the freedom of speech and discussion;" but he added, "that he was not accountable to any one for arresting the four deputies; but that he would teach Poland that first of laws, how to respect sovereigns, which the jacobin principles and those of the 3d of May did not observe." To this threat the diet made no answer; but preserved an obstinate silence. Notwithstanding that the Russian general, who was present, informed them that they must remain in that hall until they acceded to the demands, and that if these means failed he was instructed to use rigour, not a mouth was opened. At three in the morning the general rose to call in a detachment of soldiers, when a traitorous deputy in the Russian interest proposed that silence should be considered as a consent to the motion, and accordingly the marshal of the diet, Bialinski, who was of the same party, put the question, if the treaty should be signed without reservation? This was three times repeated without answer, and he declared that it had received the sanction of the diet, and accordingly it was signed on the 5th of September.

The very principle of the partisans of the worst abuses of government is injustice, and, fortunately for the cause of liberty, its features declare it so plainly to belong to the family of vice, that it cannot always avoid detection. The confederates of Targowica soon showed how little they had been influenced in their proceedings by love for their country and its ancient constitution; for they confiscated, plundered, and tyrannized even more than the Russians. But they received the treatment they deserved: they had answered the purpose Catharine wished, namely, to furnish a pretext for the invasion; and she, having no further service for them, in September dissolved the confederation.

The diet performed their last sad and unwilling office on the 23d of November. They pulled down

the beautiful structure of the constitution they had so proudly erected, and Poland, at least the remains of it, relapsed into the former absurd mode of legislation.

The allied powers did not forget to "reduce the republic of Poland into narrower limits:" Catharine advanced her frontier into the middle of Lithuania and Volhynia; and Frederic William had the remaining portion of Great Poland, and part of Little Poland, for his share of the spoil. The limits, however, it must be remembered, were not definitively marked out; military possession was the only tenure, and the Poles found that empresses and kings set at naught the denunciation, "Cursed is he who removeth his neighbour's landmark."

The remaining portion of the kingdom was ensured to Stanislas, to be governed by the old laws; but he was not allowed to reign alone even over this narrow domain. The Russian ambassador was absolute master at Warsaw, and Russian troops were the garrison.

Such was the end of the short-lived constitution of the 3d of May. Ephemeral as it was, it suggests some important reflections. There are certain stages in disorders of the political constitution as well as the physical, in which no remedies can afford any service, but, on the contrary, prove fatal. When corruptions and abuses are so widely disseminated as they were in the Polish government, nothing short of a radical reform can be beneficial: partial weeding is useless; one weed left behind is sufficient to produce another crop of the noxious plants equal to that which we removed. But to bear such a radical reform popular strength is requisite, and unfortunately Poland had delayed the desirable remedy till its force and resources were too much exhausted; and its sad fate is a warning to other states, not to defer the important season till too late.

CHAPTER XI.

Patriots at Dresden and Leipzig—Patriotic Conspiracy at Warsaw—The Patriots of Warsaw correspond with Kosciusko—The Russian Minister orders the Troops to disband—Madalinski refuses, and marches to Cracow—Kosciusko enters Cracow—Confederacy of Cracow—Kosciusko declared Generalissimo—Kosciusko's Life—Kosciusko marches against the Russians—Insurrection at Warsaw, and Expulsion of the Russians—Lithuania—Barbarities at Warsaw—Kosciusko's Camp at Wola—The King of Prussia invests Warsaw; retreats—Insurrection in Great Poland—Suwarow marches against the Patriots—Battle of Maciejowice, and Kosciusko taken Prisoner—The Russians take Praga—Massacre of Praga—Warsaw surrenders—Russian, Prussian, and Austrian Prisoners—Third Partition—Stanislas's Abdication; Death; and Character.

THE Poles have a proverb, "You may strip a Pole to his shirt, but if you attempt to take his shirt he will regain all." Although they have not precisely verified this, they seem always to have kept it in their eye as a principle of action; they have always submitted in the first instance to the greatest aggressions with wonderful indifference and docility, but have generally made the most determined resistance to the finishing act of tyranny. "The proud Poles" might be expected to find the yoke of subjugation more galling than any other nation in the world; it was still a country of nobles, men whose only business was to rule, and cherish lofty feelings. Those who were too devoted to their liberty to stay to witness their country's oppression were now wandering outcasts in foreign lands; but wherever they went they carried with them hearts which still yearned for their homes, although they could not find any enjoyment in them without independence. Dresden and Leipzig were the chief places of refuge for these patriots, among whom Potocki, Kolontay, Malachowski, Mostowski, and Kosciusko were the most conspicuous. They were not, however, willing to

sacrifice the lives of their countrymen in rash and useless struggles, but waited for a favourable juncture to unsheath the sword once more against their oppressors. But their fellow-patriots in Poland, who were feeling more keenly the pains of tyranny, were more impatient, and obliged them to hasten their plans, "and thus," says one who was enlisted among them,* "they left to Providence the issue of the most rash enterprise that could be conceived." The design was first formed at Warsaw, and the revolution regularly devised a commission of four persons forming the active body. Their agents were spread all over the kingdom; the plot was speedily maturing and would no doubt have become general had not the explosion been forestalled.

Igelstrom, who had succeeded Sievers, and was invested with plenary power, insisted on the immediate reduction of the Polish army to 15,000. At this time it consisted of about 30,000 men, divided into small bodies, scattered in different parts of the kingdom under the surveillance of the Russian troops. The permanent council was obliged to obey the mandate, and issued the orders. This was the signal for throwing off the galling yoke. A strict correspondence had been carried on between the Poles abroad and their brother patriots in Poland. Cracow was fixed on as the point of junction, and unanimous consent placed the noble Kosciusko at the head of the confederacy. The patriots of Warsaw had sent two emissaries, in September, 1793, to this great man, who had retired to Leipzig, and he then commenced communications with Ignatius Potocki and Kolontay. Not satisfied with report, Kosciusko went to the frontier of Poland, that he might ascertain the state of feeling; he then forwarded his companion Zajonczenek to Warsaw, where he staid ten days undiscovered. His report was that "the members of the

* Count Oginski.

conspiracy were zealous, but too enthusiastic, that their only connexion with the army was through Madalinski, Dzialynski, and a few subalterns.”* Kapustas, however, a banker of Warsaw, made himself very instrumental in preparing the minds of the people for the grand attempt proposed; and Madalinski pledged himself to risk all if they attempted to oblige him to disband his brigade.

The approach of such a man as Kosciusko to the frontier could not be kept secret. While Zajonczenk was at Warsaw, Kosciusko had an interview with Wodzicki, commander of 2000 troops, near Cracow, and the circumstance came to the ears of a Russian colonel stationed there; but fortunately Kosciusko was apprized of the event, and to lull suspicion immediately retired to Italy.

The arrival of Stanislas and the Russian ambassador at Warsaw from Grodno was the signal for fresh persecution. Arrests daily took place, and Mostowski, one of the chief senators, was imprisoned. About this time Zajonczenk returned from Dresden, and the king being aware of it, and knowing he was one of the emigrants, suspected his design, and informed the Russian minister; in consequence of which the patriot was ordered to leave the kingdom.

Madalinski was the first to draw the sword of rebellion. He was stationed at Pultusk, about eight leagues from Warsaw, with 700 cavalry; and on receiving the order to disband the corps, he refused, and declared it was impossible till their pay, which was two months in arrears, was advanced. After this, which occurred on the 15th of March, 1794, he set out for Cracow, having previously traversed the new Prussian territory, made several prisoners, and exacted contributions.

Kosciusko was aware of this bold step, and though

* *Histoire de la Revolution de Pologne en 1794, par un Témoin Octulaire.*

he would probably have advised more caution, knew the die was cast, and that it was now too late to debate. He hastened from Saxony, reached Cracow on the night of the 23d of March, where Wodzicki, with a body of 400 men, was ready to receive him, and on the following day was proclaimed generalissimo. The garrison and all the troops at Cracow took the oath of allegiance to Kosciusko; and a deed of insurrection was drawn up, by which this great man was appointed dictator, in imitation of the Roman custom in great emergencies. His power was absolute; he had the command of the armies, and the regulation of all affairs political and civil. He was commissioned, however, to appoint a national council, the choice being left to his own will. He was also empowered to nominate a successor, but he was to be subordinate to the national council.

Never before was confidence so fully and so unscrupulously reposed by a nation in a single individual; and never were expectations better grounded than in the present instance. Thadeus Kosciusko* was born of a noble, but not very illustrious, Lithuanian family, and was early initiated in the science of war at the military school of Warsaw. In his youth his affections were firmly engaged to a young lady, the daughter of the Marshal of Lithuania; but it was his fate to see his love crossed, and his inamorata married to another, Prince Lubomirski. He then went to France, and on his return applied to Stanislas for a military appointment; but was refused because he was a favourite of Adam Czartoryski, whom Stanislas hated. Kosciusko sought to dispel his disappointment in the labours of war. The British colonies of America were then throwing off the yoke of their unnatural mother-country—their cause was that of justice and liberty, and one dear

* He was born on the 12th of February, 1746, at the chateau of Sieniewiczze, near Brzesc-Litewski.

to the heart of a young proud-spirited Pole. Our young hero served in the patriotic ranks of Gates and Washington, and was appointed aid-de-camp to the latter great general. When the glorious struggle in the new world was crowned with success, he returned to his own country, where he found an equally glorious field for his exertions. He held the rank of major-general under Joseph Poniatowski in the campaign of 1792, to which office he had been raised by the diet, and we have already seen what a glorious earnest he then gave of what was to be expected from him, had not his ardour been checked by the king's timidity and irresolution.

The first acts of the dictator were to issue summonses to all the nobles and citizens; to impose a property-tax, and make all the requisite arrangements which prudence dictated with regard to the commissariat of his little army. On the 1st of April he left Cracow, at the head of about 4000 men, most of whom were armed with scythes; and marched in the direction of Warsaw, to encounter a body of Russians more than thrice their own number, which he understood were ordered against them by Igelstrom.

The patriots encountered the enemy on the 4th of April near Raclawicé, a village about six or seven Polish miles* to the north-east of Cracow. The battle lasted nearly five hours, but victory declared in favour of the Poles; 3000 Russians being killed, and many prisoners; eleven cannon, and a standard taken. This success confirmed the wavering patriots, and accelerated the development of the insurrection throughout the kingdom. In vain did the king issue a proclamation, by order of Igelstrom, denouncing the patriots as the enemies of the country, and directing the permanent council to commence legal proceedings against them; the tame

* A Polish or German mile is nearly equal to two French leagues, of twenty-five to a degree.

submission of these dependants of Igelstrom only served to increase the irritation of the patriots. The state of Poland is thus described by the Russian minister himself, in a letter of the 16th of April, addressed to the secretary of war at Petersburg, and intercepted by the Poles:—

“The whole Polish army, which musters about 18,000 strong, is in complete rebellion, excepting 4000, who compose the garrison of Warsaw.—The insurrection strengthens every moment, its progress is very rapid, and its success terrifying. I am myself in expectation of seeing the confederation of Lublin advance, and I have no hope but in God and the good cause of my sovereign. Lithuania will not fail, certainly, to follow the example,” &c.

On the same day Igelstrom ordered the permanent council to arrest above twenty of the most distinguished persons whom he named. He also issued his orders to the grand-general to disarm the Polish garrison of Warsaw. The 18th of April was the appointed day, as the most favourable to the design, since it was a festival, Easter eve, and most of the population would be at mass. Strong guards were to be stationed at the church-doors; the Russian troops were to seize the powder magazines and arsenal, and the garrison were then to be immediately disarmed. In case of resistance, the Cossacks received the villanous orders to set fire to the city in several places and carry off the king. The design, however, fortunately transpired on the very same day that it was formed. Kilinski, a citizen of Warsaw, discovered the plan, and informed the patriots that Russians, in Polish uniforms, were to form the guards which, on the festivals, are stationed at the churches. In confirmation of his account, he assured them that one of his neighbours, a tailor, was at work on the disguises.* A private meeting of the patriots imme-

* *Histoire de la Revolution en 1794, par un Témoin Oculaire.*

diately took place, in which it was determined to anticipate it by unfurling the standard of insurrection on the 17th. The precipitancy of the plot did not admit of much organization, the only concerted step was to seize the arsenal, which was to be the signal for the insurrection.

At four in the morning a detachment of Polish guards attacked the Russian picket, and obtained possession of the arsenal and the powder magazine, and distributed arms to the populace. A most obstinate and bloody battle took place in the streets of Warsaw, which continued almost without intermission during two days. But notwithstanding the superiority in number of the Russian troops, amounting to nearly 8000, the patriots were victorious. This glorious success was not obtained without much bloodshed; above 2200 of the enemy were killed, and nearly 2000 taken prisoners. The most sanguinary affray took place before Igelstrom's house, which was defended with four cannon and a battalion of infantry. But nothing could withstand the impetuosity of the Poles; Igelstrom narrowly escaped to Krasinski's house, where he made offers to capitulate. The king exhorted the people to suspend their attack; in the pause, while the patriots were expecting Igelstrom's submission, he escaped and fled to the Prussian camp which was near Warsaw. But the patriotic spirit of the Poles on these glorious days was unalloyed by a particle of selfish or dishonest feeling; in obedience to a proclamation demanding the restitution even of this lawful plunder of Igelstrom's house, and issued three days after the event, all the bank-notes were brought back, and even the sterling money to the amount of 95,000 ducats of gold. Many striking instances of disinterestedness were elicited by this proclamation, but the following must not be passed over in the crowd. A private soldier presented himself at the treasury with 1000 ducats of gold which had fallen into his

hands, and for a long time refused any reward for his honesty; it was with extreme reluctance that he accepted even a ducat, repeating, that he found all the reward he desired in the pleasure of serving his country and performing his duty.

On the 17th, the people crowded to the castle, where they found General Mokranowski and Zakrzewski, who had formerly been president of the city under the constitution of the 3d of May. The latter was reinstated in his post by unanimous acclamation, and the general was appointed governor. Mokranowski was one of the old body of patriots, and had signalized himself in the campaign of 1792.* They established a provisional executive council, consisting of twelve persons besides themselves. The council declared at their first meeting that they subscribed without reservation to the act of insurrection of Cracow; they also sent a deputation to the king to testify their respect to him, but at the same time prudently expressed their intention of obeying the orders of none but Kosciusko. The dictator immediately ordered all the inhabitants of Warsaw to lay down their arms at the arsenal to prevent any disturbances.

The Lithuanians did not long delay to obey the call of their Polish brethren: on the night of the 23d of April, Jasinski, with 300 soldiers, and some hundred citizens, attacked the Russian garrison at Wilna, and after a repetition of the scene of carnage at Warsaw, were left masters of the city.

Fortune, however, was not uniformly favourable to the good cause. A body of nearly 40,000 Prussians entered the palatinate of Cracow, and effected a junction with the Russians near Szczekociny, and the King of Prussia arrived in a few days to head them in person. Kosciusko advanced with 16,000 regular troops and about 10,000 peasants, to the de-

* At the head of the cavalry, in the engagement at Zielence, on the 18th of June

fence of Cracow ; and, being ignorant that the enemy were reinforced by the Prussians, found himself engaged with a force double his own. The engagement of Szczekociny took place on the 6th of June : the Poles lost about 1000 men, but made their retreat in good order, without being pursued. Kosciusko, in announcing this affair to the supreme council, says, "We have sustained a trifling loss, compared with what we have caused the enemy.—We have effected our retreat in good order, after a cannonade of three hours." Another body of the patriots suffered a similar defeat near Chelm, three days after ; and to complete the climax of misfortune, the city of Cracow fell into the hands of the Prussians on the 15th. These untoward events, following in such rapid succession, began to depress the spirits of the Poles ; and the violent and seditious exclaimed that these reverses were caused by traitors, and were greatly to be attributed to the negligence of the government in not punishing the numerous individuals who crowded the prisons. Warsaw threatened to exhibit a revival of the bloody deeds of the Mountain butchers of the French revolution. On the 27th of June, a young hot-headed demagogue inflamed the passions of the rabble with a bombastic harangue on the treachery to which he ascribed the recent reverses, and urged the necessity of checking it, by making an example of the persons now in custody. On the following day they went in a crowd to the president, to demand the immediate execution of the unfortunate prisoners ; and being refused, they broke open the prisons and actually hung eight persons. This disgraceful and almost indiscriminate butchery was with difficulty stopped by the authorities.* Every true patriot lamented deeply this blot on the glory of their revolution, and none more than the

* The "Témoin Oculaire" of the revolution of 1794 ascribes much of this excitation to the intrigues of Stanislas and his party ; and it must be confessed that the king did not evince very patriotic feelings.

humane and upright Kosciusko. "See," said he, "what tragic scenes have passed at Warsaw, almost before my eyes!—The populace have indulged in unpardonable excesses which I must punish severely.—The day before yesterday (the 28th) will be an indelible stain on the history of our revolution; and I confess that the loss of two battles would have done us less harm than that unfortunate day, which our enemies will make use of, to represent us in an unfavourable light in the eyes of all Europe!"* He ordered a strict investigation, and seven of the ring-leaders were hung.

The Emperor of Austria had preserved a neutrality up to this time; but on the 30th of June he announced his intention to march an army into Little Poland, "to prevent by this step all danger to which the frontiers of Galicia might be exposed, as well as to ensure the safety and tranquillity of the states of his imperial majesty."† The Austrians entered Poland accordingly without opposition, but offered not the least molestation to the Poles. The invasion, however peaceful, was only like a "shadow before" of "coming events."

In the mean time the Prussians and Russians continued to approach Warsaw, at the distance of three leagues from which Kosciusko was encamped, at a place called Pracka-Wola. It was here that one of his brothers in arms, and who has recorded the events of this portion of his glorious career, found him sleeping on straw. The picture he draws of this great man in his camp is an interesting view of the hero who upheld the fate of Poland. "We passed," says Count Oginski,‡ "from Kosciusko's tent to a table prepared under some trees. The frugal repast which we made here among about a dozen guests will

* *Mémoires de Michel Oginski, sur la Pologne et les Polonais depuis 1798, jusqu'à fin de 1815*, vol. i. p. 460.

† Proclamation of the 30th of June.

‡ *Mémoires sur la Pologne et les Polonais*.

never be effaced from my memory. The presence of this great man, who has excited the admiration of all Europe; who was the terror of his enemies and the idol of the nation; who, raised to the rank of generalissimo, had no ambition but to serve his country and fight for it; who always preserved an unassuming, affable, and mild demeanour; who never wore any distinguishing mark of the supreme authority with which he was invested; who was contented with a surtout of coarse gray cloth, and whose table was as plainly furnished as that of a subaltern officer; could not fail to awaken in me every sentiment of esteem, admiration, and veneration, which I have sincerely felt for him at every period of my life."

The enemy continued to advance towards Warsaw, and encamped near Wola,* a league from the city. They were 50,000 strong, 40,000 Prussians and 10,000 Russians. The city had been hastily fortified at the commencement of the insurrection, and with the protection of Kosciusko's army resisted all the enemy's attacks. The first serious combat took place on the 27th of July, and was repeated on the 1st and 3d of August, when the Prussians attempted to bombard the town, but not a house was injured. On the 2d Frederic William wrote to Stanislas, recommending him to use his influence to induce the inhabitants to surrender; to which the King of Poland answered, that it was not in his power to do so while Kosciusko's army lay between Warsaw and the enemy. The same spirit of patriotism, however, did not animate all the Poles; but it is satisfactory, though apparently singular on the first appearance, to find that the defaulters in the good cause were chiefly rich capitalists, men who in Poland at that time had scarcely a thought beyond stock-jobbing. But these malecontents formed only a small portion

* The famous field of election is in the immediate neighbourhood of this place.

of the people, and were obliged to cherish their opinions and wishes in secret. On the 16th of August, General Dombrowski, who had lately had some advantage in skirmishes with the Russians at Czerniakow, attacked them a second time, but was obliged to retire. This was followed by many warm actions, in which Dombrowski, Prince Joseph Poniatowski, Pozinski, and many others eminently distinguished themselves. The hottest affair took place in the night of the 28th. Dombrowski was attacked, while at the same time General Zajonczech was advancing his troops against the Prussian army. The courage and patriotism of the Poles predominated on this occasion. In the night of the 5th of September the Prussians and Russians made a sudden and unexpected retreat, with so much precipitation that they left the wounded and sick, as well as a great portion of their baggage.

This sudden retreat of the King of Prussia, with a superior army of 40,000 men, appeared at first so unaccountable, that even Kosciusko imagined it was a feint, and would not allow his troops to pursue them; but the real cause was the news that insurrections had broken out in the Polish provinces which had been recently annexed to Prussia. The Prussian yoke was even more galling to the Poles than that of Russia, on many accounts. In all his new provinces Frederic William had introduced German laws, and even went so far as to oblige his vanquished subjects to learn the language of their victors; so that the Poles foresaw that even the very traces of the Polish nation were to be erased from the face of the earth.* The inhabitants of Great Poland had not been deaf to the call of their brethren of Cracow and Warsaw; Mniewski, castellan of Kuiawia, and other leading men, had found means to open a communication with the patriots at the very commence-

* See *Mémoires de Michel Oginski*, vol. ii. p. 12, &c.

ment of the revolution, and had even contrived to form magazines of arms and ammunition in some retired woods during the space of five months, with such circumspection that not the slightest suspicion was excited. On the 23d of August, when most of the Prussian troops were engaged in the siege of Warsaw, and but weak garrisons were left in the Polo-Prussian towns, a small body of confederates, having assembled in a wood near Sieradz, attacked the Prussian guard, seized the magazines, and remained masters of the town. The insurrection became general in a few days; the palatinates of Kaliz and Posen joined the confederacy by the 25th, and Mniewski with a handful of heroes marched to Wloclawek, a town on the Vistula in the palatinate of Brzesc-Kuiawski, where he seized thirteen large barks laden with ammunition, designed for the siege of Warsaw. These bold examples were imitated in the other palatinates; the spirit of patriotism began to evince itself even in the heart of Dantzic, and one of the patriotic detachments penetrated as far as Silesia.

Such was the state of affairs which called Frederic William from the siege of Warsaw. His ministers and officers prompted him to take the most severe measures to reduce the patriots; in the execution of which Colonel Szekuby signalized himself by excessive barbarity; but this cruelty only served to render their tyrants the more odious in the sight of the Poles, and to animate them in their battle of freedom.

Kosciusko sent Dombrowski with a considerable number of troops to second the insurgents; and so admirably did he perform his orders, that by the middle of September all Great Poland, except a few towns, was in the possession of the patriots.

The good cause was not thriving so prosperously in Lithuania; Wilna had fallen into the hands of the Russians on the 12th of August, and nearly all the

rest of the province soon shared the same fate. Catharine, to crush the revolution, ordered her general, Suwarow, to march from the frontiers of Turkey towards Warsaw; and on the 16th of September he attacked a body of the Polish army at Krupczyce, a little village to the east of Brzesc-Litewski, and drove them towards this latter place. The attack was renewed on the following day, when the patriots were overpowered by superior forces, and many were taken prisoners.

This unfortunate defeat laid open the road to Warsaw, so that Kosciusko was obliged to advance to support the flying army. He proceeded to Grodno, and having appointed Mokranowski commander of the Lithuanian army, he returned to prevent the junction of Suwarow with Fersen, who headed the other Russian corps.

The 10th of October was the decisive day; Kosciusko attacked Fersen, near Macieiowice. The battle was bloody and fatal to the patriots; victory was wavering, and Poninski, who was expected every minute with a reinforcement, not arriving, Kosciusko, at the head of his principal officers, made a grand charge into the midst of the enemy. He fell covered with wounds, and all his companions were killed or taken prisoners. His inseparable friend, the amiable poet, Niemcewicz, was among the latter number. The great man lay senseless among the dead; but at length he was recognised notwithstanding the plainness of his uniform, and was found still breathing. His name even now commanded respect from the Cossacks, some of whom had been going to plunder him; they immediately formed a litter with their lances to carry him to the general, who ordered his wounds to be dressed and treated him with the respect he merited. As soon as he was able to travel he was conveyed to Petersburg, where Catharine condemned this noble patriot to end his days in

prison.* Clemency, indeed, was not to be expected from a woman who had murdered her husband.

Such was the termination of Kosciusko's glorious career. The news of his captivity spread like lightning to Warsaw, and every one received it as the announcement of the country's fall. "It may appear incredible," says Count Oginski, "but I can attest what I have seen, and what a number of witnesses can certify with me, that many women miscarried at the tidings; many invalids were seized with burning fevers; some fell into fits of madness which never after left them; and men and women were seen in the streets wringing their hands, beating their heads against the walls, and exclaiming in tones of despair, 'Kosciusko is no more; the country is lost!'"

In fact, the Poles seemed all paralyzed by this blow: the national council, indeed, appointed Wawrzecki successor to Kosciusko, but they despaired of being able to withstand the Russians, and limited their hopes and exertions to prevent Warsaw from being taken by assault; for which purpose they ordered the troops to concentrate near the city. They fortified Praga, one of the suburbs of Warsaw, which was separated from the city by the Vistula, and was most exposed to attack. Every individual, indiscriminately, was employed in the works. Suwarow, hearing that the King of Prussia was advancing towards Warsaw, did not choose to have his prey taken out of his mouth; and hastened with forced marches, joined Fersen, attacked the Poles on the 26th of October before Praga, and drove them into their intrenchments.

The batteries of Praga mounted more than 100 cannon, and the garrison was composed of the flower of the Polish army. On the 4th of November, Suwarow ordered an assault, and the fortification was carried after some hours' hard fighting. Suwarow,

* On the death of Catharine, as will be mentioned hereafter, he obtained his liberty.

the butcher of Ismail, a fit general for an imperial assassin, was at the head of the assailants, and his very name announces a barbarous carnage. Eight thousand Poles perished sword in hand, and the Russians, having set fire to the bridge, cut off the retreat of the inhabitants. Above 12,000 townspeople, old men, women, and children, were murdered in cold blood; and to fill the measure of their iniquity and barbarity, the Russians fired the place in four different parts, and in a few hours the whole of Praga, inhabitants as well as houses, was a heap of ashes.

The council, finding that Warsaw could not be defended any longer, capitulated on the 6th of November; many of the soldiers were obliged to lay down their arms, and the Russian troops entered the city. The authors of the revolution, the generals and soldiers who refused to disarm, had quitted Warsaw; but being pursued by Fersen, many were killed or dispersed, and the rest surrendered on the 18th.

All the patriots of consequence who fell into the hands of the Russians were immured in the prisons of Petersburg, or sent to Siberia. Ignatius Potocki, Mostowski, Kapustas, and Kalinski were among the captives. Their treatment, however, was not so cruel as it has been frequently represented; Kosciusko's prison, for instance, was a comfortable suite of rooms where he beguiled his time with reading and drawing: Potocki was equally well lodged, and amused himself with gazing at the passers-by from his windows. This was not, indeed, an exact observance of the article of capitulation, "We promise a general amnesty for all that is passed,"* but it was the very acme of honour, compared with the general tenor of Russia's conduct towards Poland.

The King of Prussia, as vengeful as the weak and bad generally are when in power, was less merciful

* Sixth article of the capitulation.

even than Suwarow. He appointed a commission to judge and punish those who had been concerned in the insurrection, as if they were *bonâ fide* his own subjects. Many patriots, too, who were so unfortunate as to fall into the Prussian's hands, were doomed to pine in the fortresses of Glogau, Magdeburg, Breslaw, &c.; and Madalinski was one of these. Austria buried some of the patriots in her prisons of Olmutz, thus consummating the triumph of barbarism.

On the 24th of October, 1795, the treaty for the third partition of Poland was concluded; but the arrangement between Prussia and Austria, as to the limits of the palatinate of Cracow, was not settled till the 21st of October, 1796.

By this third and last partition Russia acquired the remaining portion of Lithuania, and a great part of Samogitia, part of Chelm on the right of the Bug, and the rest of Vollhynia. Austria obtained the greater part of the palatinate of Cracow, the palatinates of Sandomir and Lublin, with a part of the district of Chelm, and the parts of the palatinates of Brzesc, Polachia, and Masovia which lay along the left bank of the Bug. Prussia had the portions of the palatinates of Masovia and Polachia on the right bank of the Bug; in Lithuania, part of the palatinate of Troki and Samogitia, which is on the left bank of the Niemen; and a district of Little Poland forming part of the palatinate of Cracow. Thus the banks of the Piliça, the Vistula, the Bug, and the Niemen marked out the frontiers of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Such was the result of the glorious but unfortunate revolution of 1794. The want of success is to be attributed to uncontrollable circumstances; some,* indeed, think that Kosciusko's mildness was one of the causes which in the first instance enervated the confederacy; but perhaps more is to be

* "L'excès de la douceur étoit le défaut de Kosciusko."—*Hist. par un Témoin Oculaire.*

imputed to his emancipating the serfs, and enrolling them among his troops, a step which was obstinately and selfishly opposed by many of the rich nobles. None, however, can deny that this great and good man acted up to every tittle of his oath. "I, Thadeus Kosciusko, swear to the Polish nation, in presence of the Supreme Being, that I will never employ the power which has been intrusted to me against any citizen; but that I will exert it only to defend the integrity of my country, to recover the national independence, and to strengthen the general liberty of the nation!"*

Stanislas Augustus was thus left without a kingdom; the Russian ambassador obliged him to go to Grodno, where he signed a formal act of abdication on the 25th of November, and accepted an annual pension of 200,000 ducats, which was ensured to him by the three powers, with the promise that his debts also should be paid. On the death of Catharine, which happened in November, 1796, he went to Petersburg, where he ended his unhappy and dishonourable life on the 12th of February, 1798.

Harsh and uncharitable as the world is, even the most unworthy and degenerate generally find some few so merciful as either from warmth of heart or fellow-feeling to defend them; and it would be strange if Stanislas had not some panegyrists. But, disagreeable as is the office of the moral censor, the character of Stanislas, being wound up with the destinies of a nation, ought not to pass by unnoticed. Stanislas stands in the usual predicament of kings and prominent personages, between flattering admirers and severe detractors. The usual course, in such a case, is to measure the evil with the good and take the mean between them; but this, though the readiest mode of arriving at a result, is not the surest, since it proceeds on the presumption of the truth both

* This was the oath he took at Cracow.

of the favourable and unfavourable statements. In the present instance the estimate need not be merely speculative, since there are abundant data on which to calculate. The warmest panegyrists of this unfortunate king venture no further in their praises than to give him credit for good intentions in policy, and to plead his patronage of learning and the arts as a palliation for his political errors. With regard to the first excuse, it may be remarked, that moral weakness or imbecility is no more admissible as an excuse for error than recklessness of character, since the latter is equally constitutional as the former. The second plea requires more investigation. It is customary to attribute to Stanislas the advance in learning and education which decidedly evinced itself in his reign; but while we admit his talent and taste for the trifles of literature and art, which is the utmost that can be proved, we must observe that the grand impetus to intellectual improvement was not given by Stanislas. He certainly spent not only his revenue, which was considerable, but contracted great debts, which were twice paid by the state; but it was mostly on frivolous writers, bad painters, and loose women, that those sums were expended. The progress of education and liberal inquiry is to be attributed to Konarski and his coadjutors, and the commission of education also, which was appointed by the diet, comes in for a share of the credit. Poniatowski, indeed, patronised great men in literature and the arts; but the effect of such patronage is at best of doubtful benefit; and the merit of the patron is of a negative character, being so mixed up with vanity and love of notoriety. It has been said by Rulhière, who has been pronounced "one of the most interesting and sagacious of modern historians,"* that "no magnanimity, no strength appeared in his character; that he only thought of

* *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1814.

becoming a patron of all the arts of luxury, and particularly to cultivate little objects of this nature, to which he attached the highest consequence." His panegyrist could only assume that he was not one of the chief causes of his country's annihilation, but cannot deny that no monarch could have been more suited to produce such an unfortunate effect; and though his censor might admit the truth of his assertion, "I have always wished for the happiness of my country, and I have only caused it misfortune!"* he would remind the royal criminal that even "hell is paved with good intentions."

CHAPTER XII.

Polish Patriots at Paris and Venice—The French Directory promise Assistance—Polish Confederacy at Paris—Oginski sent to Constantinople—Bonaparte's Letter to Oginski—Polish Confederacy in Wallachia broken up—The Emperor Paul, on his Accession, liberates the Polish captives—Kosciusko—Polish Legions; in Lombardy; at Rome—Suwarow, in Italy, defeats the Second Legion—Battle of Novi—Legion of the Danube—Legions perish in St. Domingo—War declared between France and Prussia—The French enter Warsaw—Treaty of Tilsit—Grand-duchy of Warsaw—Frederic Augustus—New Constitution—Diet of 1809—War with Austria—The Austrians enter Warsaw—Prince Poniatowski invades Galicia—Retreat of the Austrians—Part of Galicia, &c. added to the Grand-duchy.

NEVER was there a period in modern history when the door of hospitality was so sternly closed by most European nations against the unfortunate sons of liberty, as when the Polish patriots of the revolution of 1794 were exiled from their homes. The abuses of the French revolutionists had brought their cause into discredit even among those who had at first been their most zealous defenders; and as the generality of mankind take impressions for opinions,

* Oginski's *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 327.

and accidental associations of ideas for reasoning, they began to annex an opprobrious meaning to the very name of liberty. Many Englishmen, who had lately been so warm in their admiration of the Polish patriots, began to think, and even argue, that it was better for them to enjoy peace under any yoke than to prolong the struggle for independence. England, too, soon followed in the path which had been marked out by Frederic William, the Emperor of Austria, and the Duke of Brunswick,* to chastise the stubborn recusants of legitimate monarchy. France was almost the only government where liberty was heartily cherished; for in spite of all the jacobinism, bloodshed, and anarchy, the spirit of independence retained its existence there. It must be remembered, however, to use Buonaparte's words, that that nation "Had eighteen ages of prejudice to conquer;" and such a victory was not to be gained without great sacrifices and much revulsion of feeling. To France, then, the expatriated Poles looked for aid; the country which had "promised assistance to all nations which revolted to obtain liberty and equality,"† could not turn a deaf ear to those who had such strong claims on their protection.

All the Polish nobles who had escaped the dungeons of the three partitioning powers, hastened either to Venice or Paris. Francis Barss, the Polish agent employed in the capital by the late government, was still resident there; and by his means a confederacy was formed, which maintained a regular correspondence with a similar society at Venice. The French ambassador at the latter place assured the Poles of the protection of his government, and even offered them a room under his roof for their assemblies.

* See the Declaration addressed by the Duke of Brunswick to the people of France.—Ségur's *Décade Historique, Pièces Justificatives*, vol. ii. p. 358.

† *Décade Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 123.

The treaty of peace which was signed on the 5th of April, 1795, at Bâle, between France and the King of Prussia, did not augur any great sincerity on the side of the French ministers in their assurances to the Poles. They persuaded Barss, however, that it was only temporary, and that no mention of Poland being made in the treaty, they did not give their sanction to Frederic William's usurpation.

The confederacy at Paris, with the advice and protection of the French ministers, commissioned Count Oginski to proceed to Constantinople to negotiate with the divan in favour of the Poles, in conjunction with the French ambassador.* The confederates appointed a commission of five persons to transact their affairs, and obtained a promise from the minister at Paris to furnish the Poles with arms, and use his influence to raise a loan at Constantinople of fifty millions of piastres. In the beginning of 1796 they sent emissaries into Lithuania and Gallicia to form new confederacies to co-operate with that at Paris. The inhabitants of Gallicia had already drawn up an act of confederacy, on the 6th of January, 1796, which they forwarded to France. Above 2000 Polish soldiers of all ranks assembled in Walachia and Moldavia, and their meetings were connived at by the Turkish government; this privilege, however, was the chief advantage obtained by Oginski's mission and the interest of Aubert-du-Bayet, the French ambassador.

Oginski relates the following curious anecdote respecting Aubert-du-Bayet. "On the evening of the same day, 21st of October, 1796, we went to take a walk *al Campo dei Morti*. Aubert-du-Bayet, separating himself from his suite, and taking me by the arm, examined attentively the sepulchral stones which covered the cemeteries of the Turks and the

* The instructions to Oginski were formally signed by twenty of the principal confederates at Paris. Their meetings were held at the Hôtel Diesbach.

Armenians; and told me that he was looking for a place for his grave, for he was sure he should end his life at Constantinople. After having walked a long time, he said to me that he could not find in the whole of that place a fit spot in which to deposit his body; and that he should prefer to be buried in the court of the Hôtel de France, near the tree of liberty which was planted there. I joked him on this presentiment; but he did not cease to repeat that he should die at Constantinople, and that he should not live more than a year."

"This presentiment was verified, as I have since learned from several French officers whom I had known at Constantinople. I believe that Aubert-du-Bayet died very nearly on the anniversary of the day which I have just mentioned."*

The reader will recognise a striking resemblance between this tale and a prose fragment written by Byron, which Polidori is said to have made use of.

Buonaparte was at this time at the head of the army in Italy, engaged against the Austrians. Sulkowski, a Pole, was one of his aids-de-camp, and he particularly recommended the confederates to interest the general in their favour. If that could be effected, he said, our hopes for the re-establishment of Poland would no longer be doubtful; for the general enjoys already the full confidence of the French nation, and cannot fail to be some day at the head of the government. On receiving a letter from Oginski on the subject, Buonaparte reflected some time, and said to his aid-de-camp, "What must I answer? What can I promise?—Write to your fellow-patriot that I love the Poles, and esteem them much—that the partition of Poland is an act of iniquity which cannot be defended—that after having finished the war in Italy, I will go myself at the head of the French to oblige the Russians to restore

* See Oginski, vol. ii. p. 223.

Poland; but tell him also that the Poles must not depend on foreign help, that they must arm themselves, annoy the Russians, and keep up a communication in the interior of the country. All the fine promises which will be made them will amount to nothing. I know the diplomatic language and the indolence of the Turks. A nation which has been crushed by its neighbours cannot be restored but by sword in hand."

The Poles, assembled in Walachia and Moldavia, began to be impatient to make an incursion into Galicia, under the command of Dambrowski.* To this they were instigated also by the French ambassador at Constantinople, who sent General Cara-Saint-Cyr to join them. His object was to make a diversion of the Austrians from Italy in favour of the French army under Buonaparte. He defended this rash scheme, by quoting from Voltaire the lines—

" Un heureux temeraire
Confond en agissant celui qui délibère."

Oginski left Constantinople without deriving any further benefit from his mission, and proceeded to Bukarest, the head-quarters of the Poles in Walachia, to dissuade them from their mad project. He found that Dambrowski had caused himself to be appointed commander-in-chief of the armies of Poland and Lithuania, that he designed to penetrate into Galicia, raise contributions and recruits, to incite the peasants and artisans to rise by proclaiming the system of equality, and to fill his ranks with all the prisoners in the Austrian jails. Oginski forbade this iniquitous scheme by the French ambassador's authority, and recommended the Poles to do nothing without the will of Cara-Saint-Cyr. This advice, however, was not observed; shortly after, about a hundred of them, headed by Denisko, a Pole, who

* The reader must distinguish between this man and Dombrowski, who signalized himself in 1794, and will be mentioned again.

had accompanied Oginski and was left by him, made an irruption into Galicia, but meeting with some Austrian troops, fifty of the Poles were killed, twelve were taken and hung, while the rest escaped. This absurd expedition is supposed to have been undertaken at the instigation of the French ambassador, to ascertain what troops there were in Galicia. It proved fatal to the confederacies in that province, many of the inhabitants being compromised, all of whom were detected, laden with chains, and thrown into prison. The design being thus discovered, the Poles broke up their assembly in Walachia, and dispersed in Poland, France, and Italy.

The death of Catharine, which happened on the 17th of November, 1796, delivered the Poles from one of their most detestable tyrants. Her successor, the emperor Paul, commenced a new era in Russian history,—that of clemency. His behaviour to Kosciusko was almost heroic: he went to see him in his prison, embraced him warmly, and told him that he was free. The emperor also proposed to present him with a high military post in his service: this, however, was declined. Paul gave him 1500 serfs and 12,000 roubles, solely as a testimony of regard; but Kosciusko was determined to go to America, and returned the presents. He then proceeded by way of England* to the new world; when, having

* It was in 1798 that he touched at England on his passage to America. He staid some time at Bristol in the house of M. Vanderhort, the foreign consul, where Dr. Warner had an interview with him, which he describes in his "Literary Recollections," and gives a pleasing picture of this great man.

"I never contemplated a more interesting human figure than Kosciusko stretched upon his couch. His wounds were still unhealed, and he was unable to sit upright. He appeared to be a small man, spare and delicate. A black silk bandage crossed his fair and high, but somewhat wrinkled, forehead. Beneath it his dark eagle eye sent forth a stream of light, that indicated the steady flame of patriotism which still burned within his soul; unquenched by disaster and wounds, weakness, poverty, and exile. Contrasted with its brightness was the paleness of his countenance, and the wan cast of every feature. He spoke very tolerable English, though in a low and feeble tone; but his conversation, replete with fine sense, lively remark, and sagacious answers,

spent some time with his old comrades, he came to Paris and settled in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau. All the rest of the Poles whom Catharine had left to pine in prison were also set at liberty; and those who had been sent to Siberia, amounting nearly to 12,000, were allowed to return to their homes. Kindness and clemency are more formidable weapons in the hands of an enemy than the sword: this beneficence, perhaps, was more fatal to Polish independence than scores of Praga butcheries, and Paul was a more dangerous enemy to the liberty of Poland than the bloody Suwarow. Gratitude kept most of the Poles who were liberated on an honourable parole; and even the rest of the patriots whose possessions lay in the Russian domain began to abate in their ardour, now that those two stimuli were removed, self-interest and revenge for the actual persecution of their fellow-patriots. Kosciuszko never drew his sword again.

Prussia also had discontinued the Polish persecution since the treaty of Bâle, and liberated her prisoners. Frederic William even proposed to follow the advice which Dombrowski had given him in 1796, when this patriot general was received at court with other Polish officers, and the king asked him if the Poles were satisfied, and what was their opinion of him. To this Dombrowski answered, that the Poles would have nothing to desire further, and that the king might depend on their fidelity if he would place one of his sons on the throne of Poland, and establish the constitutional government.

evinced a noble understanding and a cultivated mind. On rising to depart I offered him my hand: he took it. My eyes filled with tears; and he gave it a warm grasp. I muttered something about 'brighter prospects and happier days!' He faintly smiled, and said (they were his last words to me), 'Ah! sir, he who devotes himself for his country must not look for his reward on this side the grave.'"—*Dr. Warner's Literary Recollections*, vol. ii. p. 132.

One of the numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine for 1817 (in which year Kosciuszko died) contains an article on the life of this great man, chiefly extracted from the *Moniteur*.

The king made no remark at the time, but it is said that preparations were afterward actually made to put this plan into execution.*

The Austrian government, on the contrary, persevered in its usual grinding policy, and did not strike off a single link from the Polish chains. Their prisons were still filled with patriots, and every day fresh victims were hung up like scarecrows to terrify the insurgents. The Poles, notwithstanding, eagerly flocked to join the ranks of the French armies who were fighting these inveterate despots in Italy.

Dombrowski, after leaving Berlin, arrived at Paris in September, 1796, and in the following month laid before the directory a plan to raise a Polish legion of refugees to serve under the French general against their common enemies. The French constitution, however, did not allow any foreign troops to be taken into pay, but the directory recommended him to lay the project before the Cisalpine republic which had been lately formed in Lombardy by Buonaparte. With the approbation of the general, an agreement was accordingly signed at Milan, on the 7th of January, 1797, with the provisional government, to take the Poles into pay. These troops were to keep their national costume, but to adopt the French cockade; their motto was to be, *Gli uomini liberi sono fratelli*. (Freemen are brothers.) In a few weeks 1200 men were under arms: they were at first formed into two battalions, but two more were soon added. This was the origin of the famous Polish legions. They began their career in March, but their first service was not the most honourable—to quell the insurrections in Lombardy. The Polish legion came in for a share of the censure which many writers have passed on this portion of the service of the army of Italy, but it seems that much

* Oginski, vol. ii. p. 270.

more might be urged in defence of this duty than could be advanced for many military affairs which have originated nearer home, and on which many persons still look with much satisfaction. The Poles, at any rate, had no reason to be ashamed of the war with Austria; there was much affinity between the cause in which their allies were now fighting and that which had been their own in 1793—resistance to foreign interference with domestic policy. This was a war, too, which the enemy had begun with threatening “exemplary and ever-memorable vengeance, by giving up the city of Paris to a military execution,” &c.* The invasion of Lombardy, one of Austria’s strongholds, needs no defence: to arm the Lombards against their tyrants, and for their own freedom, was not only prudent but generous policy; and to attack those insurgents who made common cause with the Austrians, equally with the enemy, to execute the leaders of revolt against the provisional government, were certainly justifiable steps, and surely they could not be pronounced “ferocious,”† according to the modern common-law in military matters.

The Poles showed, if not their approval of the French cause, at least so much animosity against their tyrants, the Austrians, that by April Dombrowski had 5000 men under his command. About this period Charles de la Croix, the French minister for foreign affairs, proposed to Oginski and the Polish confederates, to make a diversion of the Austrians in Gallicia; and it was arranged that the Polish legions should pass into Dalmatia to join the patriots who were then in Walachia, and invade Hungary, where they were to be supported by the French emissaries.‡ The Poles even allowed the directory to for-

* The Duke of Brunswick’s intemperate and ridiculous manifesto.—See *Ségur’s Decade, Pièces Justificatives*, vol. ii. p. 358.

† See *Family Library*, No. IV.

‡ Oginski, vol. ii. p. 278.

ward this rash plan to Buonaparte, with instruction to put it into execution; but all their "hopes vanished," says Oginski (who, *en passant*, was not one of the most sanguine Polish patriots), when news arrived that the preliminary treaty of Leoben was signed on the 18th of April, 1797. The Poles had borne the treaty of Bâle with murmurs, but this peace with Austria was "the unkindest cut of all;" and many of them now doubted of assistance from France, and began to consider all hopes of aid from that quarter chimerical.

The Polish legions were, however, still engaged in Italy, forming part of the corps which laid low the treacherous and tyrannical oligarchy of Venice.*

The patriots formed the plan of establishing the constitutional diet of 1792 at Milan; and it was proposed that it should consist of the same members, or as many of them as could be induced to join it. Malachowski, who had been marshal, readily consented to lend his sanction, and they had even fixed on a palace at Milan for the purpose. The two agents, Narbutt and Kochanowski, who had been sent to treat with the patriots, unfortunately fell into the hands of the Austrians, and the papers found on them implicated many persons within cognizance of the court of Vienna, and another series of persecution was the only fruit of this ill-contrived scheme. Malachowski suffered a year's imprisonment, and then had to pay a high ransom for his freedom.

The definite treaty of Campo-Formio signed on the 3d of October, 1797, was sad tidings to the Poles. Dombrowski requested Buonaparte to allow a Polish commissioner to be present at the congress, but was answered, that "the prayers of every friend of liberty

* The Foreign Quarterly for the second quarter of 1831, in the review of the "History of the Italian Legions in Italy," is very severe on the Poles, and particularly on Dombrowski. The author of the article seems to be strongly imbued with virulence.—"*Lettre de Jean Woytyński, Polonais, au General Dombrowski, 1798.*"

were for the brave Poles, but that only time and destiny could re-establish them." Buonaparte, however, always expressed the highest admiration for the bravery of the Polish legions. One evening, after his return from Italy to Paris, he was present at a fête, where Count Oginski was requested to play a march which he had composed for these patriots. "Come," said Napoleon, to those who summoned him, "let us go and hear, they are talking of the Polish legions: we must always help the brave Polish legions, for these Poles fight like devils."

The Polish legions were now the representatives of their nation, whose very name would almost have been forgotten, had they not so frequently and gloriously reminded Europe of the existence of that proud nation of cavaliers. They now numbered nearly 8000 men, divided into two corps, the first commanded by Kniaziéwicz, the second by Wielhorski. The first legion was employed against the pope in 1798, and on the 3d of May Dombrowski marched into Rome. He obtained the trophies which Sobieski had sent to Italy, after the siege of Vienna; namely, the Turkish standard and sabre which had been deposited at Loretto. The flag afterward always accompanied the legions, and the sword was sent to him who was most worthy to succeed Sobieski,—Kosciusko.

The Poles were doomed to be severe sufferers in the next campaign, in 1799, against the Russians and Austrians. The allied armies of Russia and Austria entered Italy under the command of the savage Suwarow. The second legion was stationed at Mantua, and had to sustain the onset of their old tyrant and butcher. Out of nearly 4000 men barely one-half escaped from Mantua. After the bloody days of the 26th of March and the 5th of April, the gallantry, but ill fortune of this proud remnant of the second legion, reduced it to 800. Mantua was obliged to capitulate on the 28th of July, and a secret article of the

treaty promised that all deserters should be given up, but that their lives were to be spared. The Austrians immediately seized the Poles, and obliged them to enter their ranks, and Wielhorski was sent a prisoner to Austria. Out of the whole of the second legion only 150 escaped to France.

The first legion's service was equally severe. After marching from the south of Italy to join the army in the north, Dombrowski obtained the command of the left wing. On the 17th and following days the bloody affairs of Trebbia took place. The Poles were now brought hand to hand with their oppressors, the Russians, and Suwarow, the butcher of Praga. Their fury cost them, in the course of these days, more than a thousand men. The battle of Novi, which was fought on the 15th of August, 1799, was even more bloody and fatal to the Poles; and the legion was almost entirely annihilated.

After the conclusion of the campaign in September, the few survivors, in spite of their late reverses, resolved to raise fresh legions. On the 11th of November, 1799, the famous revolution took place which raised Buonaparte to the consulship of France, and the laws which forbade foreigners to serve in the French army being abolished by the new constitution, Dombrowski repaired to Paris, and obtained leave to raise seven new battalions of infantry and one of artillery, to be entitled the First Legion. Kniaziéwicz also was commissioned to raise a corps, partly cavalry, to be employed under Moreau in the army of the Rhine. By October, Dombrowski led more than 5000 men to Italy, and Kniaziéwicz at the head of 3500 marched to join Moreau. The victory of Hohenlinden, on the 3d of December, is attributed in a great measure to the gallantry of "the Polish legion of the Danube."

The peace of Luneville, signed on the 9th of February, 1801, ended the services of the Polish legions for the present. The legion of the Danube was

ordered to Italy to join that of Dombrowski, and when they assembled at Milan in March, 1801, they numbered 15,000. But the peace brought no advantage to the Polish patriots, and many of them, disgusted with what they thought French ingratitude, left the service. The remaining portion were sent with the army under Leclerc to reduce the famous negro, Toussaint, and the black insurgents of the island of St. Domingo. Jablonowski, who had a brigade in the last campaign, commanded the Poles, devoted to this fatal and disgraceful service. Nearly the whole of the legion perished by the sword or the yellow fever; and the few survivors fell into the hands of the English, and were obliged to serve in Jamaica.

Brighter hopes dawned on the Poles in 1806, when Buonaparte laid low one of their tyrants, Prussia. The league between Russia and Prussia against France was hailed by the patriots; for now their interests no longer clashed with their allies, but the same battle-field would serve for the Poles to fight for their emancipation, and for Buonaparte to crush his enemies. Napoleon felt what powerful allies the Poles, fighting for liberty, would be against Russia and Prussia, and used many arts to engage them in the cause. There was one man then living near Fontainebleau, whose very name would have raised the whole population of Poland—Kosciusko. Buonaparte made him the most pressing invitations to share in the approaching campaign, and urged him to issue addresses to the Polish nation, calling upon them to embrace the present opportunity of regaining their liberty. But Kosciusko was not one of those who were dazzled by the splendour of Napoleon's career, and he divined that the military despot would be equally treacherous as hereditary tyrants. Well might he answer the emperor's emissaries, "What! despotism for despotism; the Poles

have enough of it at home, without going so far to purchase it at the price of their blood.”*

The more ardent and sanguine spirits among the Polish patriots were not so skeptical, but engaged in the campaign with the highest hopes. The decisive day of Jena, the 14th of October, 1806, brought one of Poland's tyrants down to the dust, and the French troops were cantoned in Berlin. The hearts of the Polish patriots must, indeed, have beat high as they marched through the capital of Prussia, but their hopes must have almost amounted to certainty when the French army entered the Polish territory. In the beginning of November, Dombrowski and Wybiński published, by order of Napoleon, an address to the Polish nation, announcing the speedy arrival of Kosciusko, and calling on all to throw off the foreign yoke. A proclamation was also sent out in Kosciusko's name: of such weight was that name, that even truth was thus sacrificed to obtain its sanction to the cause.†

The deception, however, did not succeed, and the refusal of Kosciusko to join the undertaking operated powerfully on many minds. The whole of Lithuania would have obeyed the call of that great man; but this one deficiency threw discredit on the whole of Napoleon's protestations. Many of the Lithuanians eyed the emperor's past acts with severity and his promises with suspicion, and felt convinced that, provided Alexander would compromise, Napoleon would sacrifice the Poles to more impor-

* Kosciusko seems to have shared in a great degree the feeling of those who, being set free and mildly treated by Paul, imagined that it would be an act of ingratitude to appear in arms against him, although for their country. The patriots sent him a letter on his liberation, “but,” says Oginski, “he would not commit himself by directly answering a letter addressed to him with forty signatures. He contented himself with expressing, in the answer he made me, how sensible and grateful he was for the sentiments they felt for him, and he repeated the sincere prayers which he never ceased to make for the welfare of his fellow-patriots.”—*Oginski*. vol. ii. p. 287.

† A long absurd appeal was also published in his name shortly before his liberation, in which he is made to talk of his cruel jailer, irons, &c. A pamphlet too was written to expose this palpable forgery.

tant interests. It is confessed, however, that above 12,000 men left Volhynia and Lithuania to join the Polish legions, and at the first news of the approach of the French army the Poles drove out the Prussian garrisons from Kalisz and several forts, and by the 16th of November, Dombrowski had formed four new regiments at Posen.

A Russian army under Benningsen had occupied Polish Prussia early in November, and entered Warsaw to repress the general rising of the Poles; but finding themselves obliged to retire on the approach of the French army, they had intrusted the command of the city to Prince Joseph Poniatowski. The French advanced-guard under Murat, entered Warsaw on the 28th of November. He appointed General Gouvion St. Cyr governor of this capital, and instituted a provisional government.

Napoleon established his head quarters at Posen on the 27th of November. His entry was a triumph, and the people went out to meet him as the saviour of their country. On the 11th of December he signed a treaty of peace with Saxony, which he raised into a kingdom. On the 18th he entered Warsaw, and the affairs of Pultusk and Golymin, though not very glorious to the French arms, cleared Prussian Poland of Russian troops.

The bulletin issued at Posen on the 1st of December, 1706, was not at all adapted to increase the ardour of the Poles. Like most of Napoleon's documents of this kind, it is couched in mystery.

"Shall the throne of Poland be re-established?" it runs; "and shall this great nation resume its existence and independence? Shall it spring from the abyss of the tomb to life again? God only, who holds in His hands the issues of all events, is the arbiter of this great political problem; but certainly there never was a more memorable or interesting event."*

* This was inserted in the *Moniteur* for the 12th of December

This bulletin produced much lukewarmness among many of the Poles, and they began to suspect with justice, that their independence was indeed a "problem," if it was to depend on Napoleon Buonaparte. On the 14th of January, 1807, a supreme legislative commission was established at Warsaw, of which Malachowski, Potocki, and Prince Joseph Poniatowski were the chief members. The late possessions of Prussia in Poland were divided into six departments—Warsaw, Posen, Płock, Kalisz, Bromberg, and Bialystok.

The *pospolite* had been summoned to assemble by the 1st of January, and they took the field with the French troops with their accustomed gallantry. The anniversary of the glorious constitution of the 3d of May at length dawned on Warsaw, and never did a people hail more fervently the recovery of liberty.

The bloody battle of Friedland, fought on the 14th of June, 1807, reduced the allies to submission, and the treaty of Tilsit was signed on the 7th of July. Now that Napoleon had obtained one great point, the acknowledgment of his title by Russia, till then the only recusant on the continent, he began to forget his faithful soldiers the Poles. He was perhaps as apprehensive of a continuation of the war with Russia as Alexander himself, after the severe specimens he had seen of Russian fighting at Eylau and Friedland. He also professed a great esteem for the Russian emperor, and far from raising obstacles or expressing a wish for concessions, he gave up the district of Bialystok to the empire. It is also stated, on good authority, that Napoleon offered to unite Prussian Poland to the Russian empire, on condition that Alexander would agree to his continental system.* As the views of Russia did

* "He did not scruple to propose the reunion of Warsaw and Prussian Poland to the empire of Russia; and though all Napoleon's partisans have denied and thrown doubt on this proposal, it is nevertheless

not entirely coincide with his wishes, the treaty of Tilsit declared that the portion of Poland lately possessed by Prussia should be formed into an independent government, under the title of the Dutchy of Warsaw. It consisted of about 1800 square leagues in extent, divided into six departments, Posen, Kalisz, Płock, Warsaw, Lomza, and Bydgoszcz; and the population amounted to about 4,000,000. Frederic Augustus, king of Saxony, the same whom the constitution of the 3d of May had called to the throne, was chosen by Napoleon to be grand-duke.

A commission was appointed by Napoleon to draw up a constitution for the new dutchy; and the code was presented to the emperor, and approved, on the 22d of July, 1807. Slavery was abolished. Two legislative chambers were instituted to form a diet. The executive power was vested in the king's hands.

On the 20th of November Frederic Augustus arrived at Warsaw, and regulated the economy of his little dutchy. The principal offices were all filled with distinguished Poles, and Prince Joseph Poniatowski was at the head of the war department. Julian Niemcewicz, the poet, and friend of Kosciusko, was appointed secretary of state. The army was raised to twelve regiments of infantry, six of cavalry, a brigade of artillery, and the legion of the Vistula. It was portioned into three divisions under the command of Poniatowski, Zaionczek, and Dombrowski.

The first diet was held on the 10th of March, 1809, and Ostrowski, formerly treasurer of the crown, was chosen marshal. The session was limited to fifteen days. Forty-eight millions of florins were voted for the government. The Code Napoleon was also introduced by a great majority.

true that it was made, and I have since seen the most authentic proofs of it."—*Oginski*, vol. ii. p. 344.

Scarcely had the diet finished its labours, when Austria declared war against France on the 6th of April. The Archduke Ferdinand, with above 30,000 men, entered the dutchy by Konskie without any preliminaries, and on the 15th, Poniatowski received a letter from him stating the views of Austria. But the prince was not disposed to listen to such representations; but put himself at the head of about 10,000 troops and marched against the enemy. He was attacked at Raszyn, four leagues from Warsaw, on the 19th of April, and made an obstinate stand till nightfall, and withdrew in good order. Warsaw, whose fortifications were not then very strong, could not be expected to make a very long resistance, and Poniatowski knowing the inutility of endangering the city by the feeble resistance of his little army, accepted the offer of Ferdinand to have an interview on the 20th of April. The terms agreed on were, that the city of Warsaw should be intrusted to the hands of the Austrians, while the army was at liberty to remove where it pleased. The archduke exacted obedience in Warsaw by planting loaded cannon in the principal streets, and requiring hostages.

Prince Poniatowski adopted the bold advice of Dombrowski, to enter Gallicia and rouse their subject brethren there to rebellion: insurrection immediately followed his daring entrance, and on the 14th of May he marched into Lublin. On the 19th Sandomir was taken by assault, and other towns soon surrendered. On the 28th of May the Poles entered Leopol, where the inhabitants embraced their Polish brothers with tears of joy. A provisional government was instituted at Zamosc, and the whole of Gallicia rose up in favour of their brave deliverers.

Dombrowski, who with his corps had been left in the dutchy of Warsaw, exerted himself to raise levies against the Austrians. He defeated them at

Thorn, on the 14th of May; and following up his victory, he drove the enemy towards the frontier. Ferdinand, finding his quarters insecure, and hearing of the reverses in Austria, levied a contribution in Warsaw of 40,000 florins, and fled secretly with his aid-de-camp, and his troops followed in the night of the 1st of June. On the next day Zaionczek and his corps entered Warsaw.

The Emperor of Russia had engaged at the interview of Erfurth, in 1808, to act in conjunction with France, but had been very tardy in executing his promise; now, however, that victory declared against the Austrians in Austria as well as Poland, he ordered 48,000 men into Galicia, who, however, merely followed in the wake of Poniatowski. The enemy retreated, and evacuated Galicia on all points.

The duchy of Warsaw appointed a government for the occupied country; but orders came from Napoleon to establish a provisional government in his name; which was done, and allegiance sworn to the emperor. On the 15th of July Poniatowski entered Cracow, and on the 16th was published the armistice which Austria had entered into with Napoleon, after the battle of Wagram on the 6th of July; an envoy was sent to Napoleon to acquaint him with the events of the campaign, and Poniatowski was complimented with a sword, and a cross of the legion of honour.

The treaty of peace was signed at Vienna on the 14th of October. The Poles were again deceived by Napoleon; only four departments of the conquest, Cracow, Radom, Lublin, and Siedlce, were added to the duchy of Warsaw, while the circles of Tarnopol and Zbasz were ceded to Russia. The salt mines of Wieliczka were to be in common between Austria and the duchy.

This accession of territory to the duchy was, however, of very beneficial effect to the Polish cause, and more perhaps in its tendency than its immediate consequence. It was an earnest to the Poles of future

advancement; and they flattered themselves, that, as the dutchy of Warsaw was gradually extending, it would at length attain the complete growth of the ancient kingdom of Poland.

CHAPTER XIII.

State of the Dutchy of Warsaw in 1812—Napoleon's Designs; Treaty with Austria—Alexander's Treatment of the Lithuanians—Russian Invasion—Napoleon enters Wilna—Napoleon's Answer to the Poles—Confederacy—Burning of Moscow and Retreat of the French—Wilna and Warsaw entered by the Russians—Prince Poniatowski retires to Cracow; joins Buonaparte in Saxony; is drowned at Leipzig—Polish Legions follow Napoleon to France—The Allies enter Paris—Kosciusko's Letter to Alexander—Alexander's Answer—Dombrowski and the Polish Legion return to Warsaw—Congress of Vienna—The Kingdom of Poland annexed to Russia—New Constitution—Lithuania, Posnania, Galicia, and Cracow—Diet of 1818—Infringements of the Constitution—Death of Alexander—Nicholas—Poles involved in the Russian Conspiracy; acquitted—Nicholas crowned at Warsaw in 1829—Infringements of the Constitution—Prospects of Poland,

THE year 1812 was destined to form another important era in the annals of the Poles. A small fraction indeed of the Polish population were restored to their rights, but the liberty thus obtained was not the substantial and invaluable blessing for which they had fought and bled so many years; their grand-duke was a mere vassal of Napoleon, and the dependence of the dutchy on France was unavoidable, since it was too limited, and its resources too contracted, to enable it to defend itself.

It was, at this time, in the most lamentable state of wretchedness. "Nothing," says M. de Pradt,* "could exceed the misery of all classes. The army was not paid; the officers were in rags; the best houses were in ruins; the greatest lords were com-

* Napoleon's ambassador at Warsaw.—See *Histoire de l'Ambassade en Pologne*

pelled to leave Warsaw, from the want of money to provide their tables." The Poles flattered themselves, however, that the grand scale of their military establishment, so disproportionate to the present magnitude of the duchy, was a proof that Napoleon did not intend to confine his exertions to what had already been effected, but meant the duchy only as a nucleus for future increments.

The Poles fancied also that their hopes were about to be realized when Buonaparte threatened Russia with the invasion of 1812. He took every precaution to impress them with the belief that it was his design to restore the kingdom of Poland to its former state; and Montalivet, his minister for the home department, having let fall some hints in public, that such a plan had never fallen into his views, he commissioned Marshal Duroc to remove the bad impression thus caused, by making the strongest assurances of Napoleon's interest in the Poles, and persuading them that the remark had been made only to blind the Russians.

Napoleon's determination was by no means formed with respect to Poland; on one occasion he inadvertently exposed the insincerity of his promises, by owning that his conduct to that country was "merely a whim." It is certain that he could have had no objection to see the kingdom of Poland re-established, since it would have formed a strong barrier against Russia; but he did not wish to render the rupture between himself and Alexander irremediable, as he would have done by openly wresting Lithuania from him. His desire was, that all the movements of Poland might seem to proceed from herself. With regard to the Austrian share of that kingdom, he had made up his mind, in case of the re-establishment of Poland, that it should be restored for an indemnification. On the 14th of March, 1812, he concluded a treaty with the court of Vienna, and some of the secret articles were concerning this business. Napo-

leon guaranteed the possession of Galicia to Austria, even if the kingdom of Poland were re-established; but in that case, "if it suited the views of the Emperor of Austria to cede Galicia in exchange for some Illyrian provinces, the arrangement was to take place."

The conduct of the Emperor Alexander to the Lithuanians was calculated to make them weigh Napoleon's promises and designs with suspicious precision before they credited them. They were not now, as they once were, happy to catch at the most distant gleam of hope, when no misfortune could have much aggravated their misery; but they had something to lose by failure, some degree of happiness at stake. The good policy of Alexander tended to make them subjects rather than slaves. Their taxes were not raised; their privileges were preserved; their laws underwent very little change, and they had the appointment of most of their officers. Alexander expressed the greatest anxiety for their welfare; he established eight governors of Lithuania over the eight divisions, prepared a liberal constitution for them, and even proposed to raise them into a distinct kingdom. He particularly wished the new constitution to extend its protection over the serfs. "Particularly, do not forget the peasants," he said to Count Oginski, whom he employed to draw up a plan of the laws; "they are the most useful class, and your serfs have always been treated like helots." These words sound strangely in a Russian despot's mouth, particularly when we remember the state of the Russian serfs.* Alexander too patronised the learned institutions; and it is a singular fact, that the university of Wilna flourished more under the dominion of Russia than it had ever before done. He ordered public schools to be instituted dependent on the university, and appropriated their ancient

* Alexander pretended to ameliorate it by an *oukase*; but very little real benefit was derived from it.

revenues to the same purpose. Nor were these exertions fruitless: Wilna became the sojourn of learned men; education was generally diffused; and the Lithuanians began to think to whom they were indebted for these good things, and how "gentle a tyrant" they had found in the Russian despot.

Seventy thousand Poles marched in the colossal army which Buonaparte led against Russia in 1812. On the 26th of June the diet of the dutchy of Warsaw assembled; and Prince Adam Czartoryski was appointed marshal. The minister of finance, Thadeus Matuszewicz, had been directed by Napoleon to make a report of the state of the country on this day; the speech was prepared by the French ambassador, Pradt, and was delivered in full diet. At the words, "Shall Poland exist? What do I say? It does exist," one burst of enthusiastic applause prevailed among the vast assembly of deputies and spectators. The Poles now felt certain that they should see their kingdom spring up afresh; Warsaw was one scene of festivity, and the national cockades of blue and amaranth were every where exhibited. The expressions, "the kingdom of Poland," and "the body of the Polish nation," had been introduced into the speech by the express orders of Napoleon; and the Poles firmly trusted that they would not be vague words. The diet decreed a general confederation; a confederate council of twelve was appointed, of which Prince Czartoryski was president; and its first act was to recall from the Russian service all Poles in every capacity, and to declare them absolved from their oaths of allegiance to the emperor. The dietines were convoked to accede to the confederacy, which they did unanimously.

In the mean time the French army had entered Lithuania, and on the 26th of June Napoleon reached Wilna. A deputation, commissioned by the diet to wait on him there, presented him with an address, which was prepared by himself. His answer was

mysterious and unsatisfactory. "In my situation I have many interests to conciliate and many duties to perform. If I had reigned at the time of the first, second, or third partition of Poland, I would have armed all my people to support you.—I love your nation; during the last sixteen years I have seen your soldiers at my side in the fields of Italy, as well as those of Spain. I applaud all that you have done; I sanction the efforts you wish to make; I will do every thing in my power to second your resolutions.—I have always used the same language since my first appearance in Poland; I must add here, that I have guarantied Austria the integrity of her states, and that I cannot authorize any design or step that may tend to disturb her in the peaceable possession of the Polish provinces which remain under her power. Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Witepsk, Polock, Mohilow, Volhynia, the Ukraine, and Podolia be animated with the same spirit which I have witnessed in Great Poland, and Providence will crown with success the purity of your cause; will reward this devotion to your country, which has so much interested me in your behalf, and has given you so many claims to my esteem and protection, on which you may depend under all circumstances."

This evasive speech cooled the ardour of the Poles; and most of the Lithuanians who had remained in indecision now felt convinced that nothing was to be expected from Napoleon, and that the Russian despot was a man of better faith than the military tyrant of France. Napoleon's proclamation on entering Lithuania had roused their suspicions, by announcing to his troops that they were now treading on the enemy's ground. The soldiers too behaved to the inhabitants as enemies, villages were burnt or plundered, the corn cut down green for the horses, murders occurred, women were insulted, and Napoleon expected that the people who were thus treated would receive him as a friend. Instead of finding "all

Poland on horseback," as he expected, he found that many people fled at his approach, and that the rest eyed him with suspicion.

The deputies of the kingdom of Poland called on the Lithuanians to join the confederacy; and accordingly the dietines were convoked for that purpose on the 15th of August. Napoleon established a provisional government at Wilna, distinct from that of the dutchy. It consisted of seven members and a secretary-general. They ordered ten regiments to be raised, and several rich nobles volunteered their fortunes to equip them. Notwithstanding their exertions, the levies went on slowly; the *pospolite*, which Napoleon had estimated at more than 100,000, decreed him a guard of honour, but only three cavaliers followed him.*

The Polish troops, commanded by Prince Poniatowski, formed the fifth corps of the "grande armée." They distinguished themselves in the battles of Mir, Smolensko, Borodino, Kalouga, &c. At length came the dreadful conflagration of Moscow, and the still more dreadful retreat. The Poles shared in all its horrors, and displayed much vigour at the bloody passage of the Beresina. On the 3d of December Buonaparte deserted his army, and proceeded incognito to Paris by way of Warsaw. His singular rencontre with the Abbé de Pradt is well known. The feeble exertions of the Polish government were of no avail, and the appeal of Frederic Augustus raised no soldiers. A proclamation was issued at Warsaw on the 20th of December, calling on the Poles to join the confederacy. "Rise, heroes of Lanckrona and Czenstochowa!" ran the invocation, but in vain. Prince Joseph Poniatowski was appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish forces, as well as minister at war. Nearly 20,000 men still survived the Russian campaign. The remains of the "grande

* Ségur's Histoire de Napoleon et de la Grande Armée.

armée" passed through Wilna on the 9th of December, and the Russians entered on the following day. The Emperor Alexander arrived shortly after his army, and proclaimed a general amnesty to all the Poles who had formerly been under his government. Poniatowski reached Warsaw with his corps on the 25th of December. He united himself with the Austrian troops commanded by Prince Schwartzenberg, and they vacated Warsaw on the 7th of February, 1813, and marched towards Cracow, where the Poles on their arrival mustered barely 3000 men. Dombrowski and his small corps accompanied the French army.

On Poniatowski's retreat from Warsaw all authority was suspended; the ministerial council withdrew to Petrikau, and afterward to Czenstochowa, where the members dispersed. The Russians soon took possession of the city, having previously published an amnesty. A temporary government was immediately instituted, of which the president was Lanskoi.

Poniatowski remained at Cracow till May, where he formed a new corps called that of Cracus. By May he augmented his little army to nearly 13,000 men, 5000 of whom were cavalry. This body left the Austrian territories, reached Zittau on the 10th of June, 1813, and joined Napoleon, who was then with his army in Saxony.

Buonaparte had again taken the field on the 18th of April, 1813, in Saxony, where he was joined by the wreck of the "grande armée." Poniatowski's body soon formed the eighth corps. The battles of Dresden, &c. were only preparatory to the decisive day of Leipzig, the 19th of October. Poniatowski was ordered to cover the retreat of the French army; and the officer whom Buonaparte had appointed to blow up the bridge over the Pleisse, doing so before the time, the remaining troops were obliged to plunge into the stream for safety. The confusion

was dreadful, and fatal to the chivalrous Poniatowski; after being twice wounded, he rushed into the stream and sunk for the last time. He had been appointed marshal of the empire by Buonaparte only four days before. Thus ended the glorious but unfortunate career of this gallant soldier, who maintained to the last the proud character of a patriotic Pole, and threw a redeeming lustre on the sullied name of Poniatowski.

The survivors of the Polish army, under the command of Sokolnicki, retreated with the French army, and particularly distinguished themselves in the battle of Hanau on the 30th of October. Four days after this, Buonaparte, hearing that they intended to return, harangued the officers on their route. "You have ever acted faithfully to me," said the sinking emperor; "you would not abandon me without informing me, and you have even promised to accompany me as far as the Rhine.—To-day I wish to give you some good advice. Tell me, when do you intend to return?—You are free to go home, if you please. Two or three thousand men the less, brave as you are, will make no difference in my affairs."

The Poles felt that they were bound in honour not to desert Napoleon merely because his glory was on the wane; and accordingly accompanied him to France.

After the allies had entered Paris in 1814, Kosciuszko, who had been living near Fontainebleau, sent a letter to the Emperor Alexander, on the 9th of April:—

"Sire; if from my obscure retreat I dare to address my petition to a great monarch, a great general, and, above all, a protector of humanity,* it is because your generosity and magnanimity are well known to me.

* This cannot be termed republican sincerity.

I request three favours of you: the first is, to grant a general amnesty to the Poles without any restriction, and that the serfs scattered in foreign countries may be regarded as free if they return to their homes; the second, that your majesty will proclaim yourself king of Poland, with a free constitution approaching to that of England, and that you cause schools to be established there for the instruction of the serfs; that their servitude be abolished at the end of ten years, and that they may enjoy the full possession of their property. If my prayers are granted, I will go in person (though ill) to throw myself at your majesty's feet to thank you, and to be the first to render you homage as my sovereign. If my feeble talents could yet be of any utility, I would set out instantly to rejoin my fellow-citizens, to serve my country and my sovereign with honour and fidelity.

"My third request, though personal, sire, is near my heart and feelings. I have been living fourteen years in the respectable house of M. Zeltner, of the Swiss nation, formerly ambassador from his country to France. I owe him a thousand obligations, but we are both poor, and he has a numerous family. I beg for him an honourable post, either in the new French government, or in Poland. He has talents, and I vouch for his fidelity under every trial.*

"I am, &c.

"Kosciusko."

To this Alexander returned an autograph answer.

"I feel great satisfaction, general, in answering your letter. Your wishes shall be accomplished. With the help of the Almighty, I trust to realize the regeneration of the brave and respectable nation to which you belong. I have made a solemn engagement, and its welfare has always occupied my thoughts.—How satisfactory it would be to me,

* Oginski, vol. iv. p. 175.

general, to see you my helpmate in the accomplishment of these salutary labours! Your name, your character, your talents, will be my best support.

"Accept, general, the assurance of all my esteem.*

"ALEXANDER."

After the treaty of Fontainebleau was signed, Dombrowski requested Alexander's permission for the Poles to return to their country; he was told that they would march with the Russian army, and on their arrival at Warsaw, would be at liberty to leave the service or continue in it. The grand-duke Constantine, Alexander's brother, was appointed their commander-in-chief. They entered Posen on the 25th of August, 1814. On their route they passed by Nancy in Lorraine, where the remains of Stanislas Leszczynski, one of their favourite monarchs, were deposited; and performed a funeral ceremony over his tomb in the church of Bonsecours. Sokolnicki delivered an oration on this interesting occasion.†

A few days after Alexander's return to Petersburg in July, 1814, he gave an audience to the deputies

* Kosciusko again wrote to Alexander at Vienna, on the 10th of June, 1815. He found that Lithuania was not to participate in the advantages of a constitution, and he says, "One anxiety only troubles my soul and my joy. I was born a Lithuanian, sire, and I have only a few years to live; nevertheless, the veil of futurity still covers the destinies of my native land, and of so many provinces of my country. I cannot forget the *magnanimous promises* which your imperial majesty has deigned to make verbally to me and to several of my compatriots." To this no answer was returned, and Kosciusko felt certain that his apprehensions were well founded, and on the 13th of June he announces his intention of retiring to Switzerland. This design he soon put into execution, and went to reside at Soleure, where he ended his glorious life on the 16th of October, 1817. His corpse is deposited in the cathedral of Cracow, in the same chapel where Sobieski and Joseph Poniatowski had been laid before him; and on the summit of the artificial mountain, Bronislawa, national gratitude has erected a monument to his immortal memory.

† "These," said the orator, "are the wrecks of the numerous phalanxes raised and reproduced as by enchantment, and which that Polish Bayard (Joseph Poniatowski) has so many times conducted to victory: these are the precious remains of a troop which he formed for glory; these are warriors covered with honourable scars, &c."—See *Œuvres Choisies de Stanislas*, &c.—Hist. par M^dine. de St. Ouen.

of the Lithuanian governments, and concluded his address to them with these words, "Tell your constituents that all is forgotten and pardoned, and that they must not have any doubt of the interest that I feel for them and the desire I have to see them happy and content."

The fate of the Poles was now an object of solicitude to every liberal mind in Europe, and the consultations of the congress of Vienna were watched with the greatest impatience. The same feeling which leagued the allies against the usurpation of Buonaparte bound them to atone for their own sins in that way towards the Poles, by restoring to them their independence. "The avowed principle of the grand confederacy which has so recently delivered the world was, that all should be united for the protection of all,—that the independence of each state should be secured by the combination of its neighbours,—and that henceforth they alone should be put in jeopardy who attempted to violate that mutual paction of defence by which all were defended.—Is it not *natural* in such a moment to look for the restoration of Poland?"* Even the allies had no reason to make the Poles' allegiance to Napoleon an objection to their re-establishment, since that charge was equally applicable to themselves; Russia, Austria, and Prussia having all, at different times, been accessaries to his schemes.†

On the 3d of May, 1815, the congress of Vienna decided the fate of Poland. The fifth article of the treaty between Russia and Austria declared that the dutchy of Warsaw should be formed into a kingdom, to be united to the crown of Russia, but should enjoy a separate constitution and administration. The portion of Eastern Gallicia which had formed part

* See an article on Poland in the Edinburgh Review of September, 1814.

† See an Appeal to the Allies and the English Nation on behalf of Poland, 1814.

of the dutchy was now ceded to Austria, as well as the salt mines of Wieliczka. Cracow, with its territory, was created into a republic with a distinct constitution,* under the protection of the three powers. A portion of the dutchy was also given to Prussia under the title of the grand-dutchy of Posnania. It was also added, "that the Polish subjects of the respective powers should obtain a representation and national institutions, regulated by the mode of political existence which each of the governments to which they belong shall think useful and proper to be granted."

On the 25th of May Alexander issued a proclamation, and on the 20th of June he was proclaimed King of Poland at Warsaw. All the authorities repaired to the cathedral, and took the oath of allegiance to the new king. The administration continued in the hands of the provisional government until the constitution was framed. Alexander had previously appointed a commission at which Count Ostrowski presided for this purpose. The emperor himself arrived at Warsaw in November, 1815, where he was received with the greatest acclamations. Medals of the emperor were struck with the inscription *Unus nobis restituit rem*. On the 24th of December, 1815, the new constitution was completed; it was very similar to the constitution of the 3d of May; and the principal articles were as follows:—

The government consists of three states, namely, the king, and an upper and lower house of parliament. The executive power is vested in the king and his officers. The monarch is to be hereditary; he declares war, appoints the senators, ministers, counselors of state, bishops, &c., convokes, prorogues, or dissolves parliament. The king may appoint a lieutenant, who must either be a member of the royal family or a Pole. The king, or his lieutenant, is

* This may be seen in Oginski, vol. iv. p. 196.

assisted by a state council, consisting of the ministers of administration *ex officio*, and counsellors, whom the king may choose to appoint. The ministerial administration is divided into five departments:

1st. The department of public education.

2d. Judicial department, chosen from the members of the supreme tribunal.

3d. Home and police department.

4th. War department.

5th. Finance department.

Each of these departments is under the control of a minister.

The ministers are responsible for any act or decree contrary to the constitution.

The king and the two houses of parliament form the legislative authority. The senate, or upper house, consists of princes of the blood-royal, bishops, palatines, and castellans. Their office is for life, and they are appointed by the king. The senate, however, presents two candidates for a vacancy, and the choice rests with the monarch. A senator is required to pay taxes to the amount of 12,000 Polish florins. The number is never to exceed half of that of the lower house.

The lower house consists of seventy-seven members, to be elected by the nobles in the dietines, one for each district, and fifty-one members elected by the commons. The qualifications for a member are, that he must be of the age of thirty years, and pay annual taxes to the amount of 100 Polish florins. Every member vacates his seat by accepting a civil or military office. The electors among the commons are landholders, manufacturers, and those having a stock or capital to the amount of 10,000 florins, all curates and vicars, professors, public teachers, &c., all artists distinguished for talent, whether in the useful or elegant arts.

The diet is to meet every second year at Warsaw, and to sit thirty days. All motions are decided by a

majority of votes, and a bill passed in one house is to be then forwarded to the other. All money bills must be read in the lower house first. The king's consent is necessary to every bill.

The supplies were to be voted every four years.

Religious toleration was guarantied, as well as the liberty of the press;* and no person was to be punished without the sanction of the laws.

The emperor appointed the Polish veteran Zaionczek his lord-lieutenant.

Such was the constitution to be enjoyed by 4,000,000 of the Polish nation. The other portions of Poland, Polish Prussia, Lithuania, Gallicia, and the republic of Cracow, were not, in appearance, equally fortunate. The congress of Vienna promised constitutional charters to each of them, but the promise has been kept only in letter. The grand-duchy of Posnania was granted a diet by Prussia in 1822; it meets every second year. Their privilege consists in making representations to the king, who reserves the right of decision. Most of the offices are held by Germans, although the diet obtained a promise that Poles should be eligible. Gallicia also has a diet which sits every year at Leopold for three days, to receive the orders of government.

Lithuania formed a distinct province, governed by the ancient laws, modified by the emperor's edicts. It is supposed that Alexander designed to unite it to the kingdom of Poland; but his intention was not executed. It was divided into three governments, Wilna, Grodno, and Minsk, and governed by Lithuanian nobles. The magistrates were appointed by the dietines.

The first constitutional diet of the kingdom of Poland was held in 1818. The emperor opened it in person on the 15th of March. One of the remarks made in his speech was certainly true.—“Notwith-

* The following restriction is added to this article.—“The law will appoint the means of checking its abuses.”

standing my efforts, perhaps, all the evils you have had to groan under are not yet repaired. Such is the nature of things, good can only be effected slowly, and perfection is inaccessible to human nature."

Soon did the fine professions of Alexander begin to prove delusive; the authorities commenced by trespassing on the pale of the constitution. So closely was Kosciusko's prophecy fulfilled, that it seemed as if his shade were still speaking from the tomb. "From the very first, I foresee a very different order of things; that the Russians will occupy, equally with us, the chief places of government. This certainly cannot inspire the Poles with very great confidence; they foresee, not without fear, that in time the Polish name will fall into contempt, and that the Russians will soon treat us as their subjects."* The article of the constitution which declared the liberty of the press was nullified by an act of the 31st of July, 1819, and other similar encroachments of power began to be experienced.

The diet of 1820, however, fought bravely for their liberties, and threw out, with a great majority, a bill to abolish the responsibility of ministers, one of the grand articles of the constitution. They also impeached the two ministers who had signed the ordinance for the suspension of the liberty of the press.

The ministers determined to be revenged for this opposition, and squandered three-fourths of the revenue yearly on the army, so that the remainder was barely sufficient to meet the expenses. In consequence of this, the secretary of state, who was always resident with the king, and was now at Petersburg, issued a writing, stating that it would be necessary to devise a change of the political existence of Poland if she could not support her government in her present form. This was soon answered by an abundant contribution.

* Lettre de Kosciusko au Prince Adam Czartorowski, Vienna, June 13, 1815.

A state prison was soon established at Warsaw ; espionage became general, and prosecutions imbittered the feelings of the Poles against their tyrants. An ordinance was passed in 1825, before the assembly of the diet, and signed by Prince Lubecki, which abolished the publicity of debate in the diet; thus at once destroying one of the important checks which honesty has upon every species of chicanery.*

In the same year, on the 1st of December, died the Emperor Alexander, King of Poland. Constantine, the heir-apparent, having resigned his right of succession as long back as 1823, and still adhering to his determination, his brother Nicholas succeeded to the throne. On the 25th of December he issued a proclamation to the Polish people, in which he promised to preserve the constitution granted by his brother inviolate. "Poles," he says, "we have already declared that our invariable wish is that our government may be only a continuation of that of the emperor and king Alexander I., of glorious memory; and we declare to you, consequently, that the institutions which he has given you shall remain without any changes. In pledge, I promise and swear before God that I will observe the constitutional charter, and that I will exert all my care to maintain its observation."†

The conspiracy in Russia broke out on the 26th of December, 1825, and the persons appointed to investigate it pretended that its ramifications extended to Warsaw. Above 200 persons were arrested in Poland and Lithuania, and a commission was insti-

* "This violation was made by the advice of the sworn enemy of Poland, the ferocious Nowosilcow, who, during his long residence in our capital, was only the imitator of the barbarous Repnin. To account for such arbitrary conduct they made use, according to the Russian custom, of a diplomatic pretext; namely, the government pretended that it wished in that way to avoid all influence over the elections. This motive, indeed, was only a trick employed to deceive Europe, for the government only redoubled its influence."—*La Grande Semaine des Polonais, ou Histoire des Memorables Journées de la Revolution de Varsovie*, 1831.

† Oginski, vol. iv. p. 315.

tuted, which is contrary to the constitution, to inquire into the affair. It consisted of ten persons, of whom only three were Poles. The only discovery of the inquisition was, that patriotic societies had existed in Poland since 1821. Nicholas, however, commenced his reign by discountenancing this illegal commission of inquiry, and referred the investigation to the senate. Eight of the principal persons accused were selected for trial; but they were acquitted in 1828, with only one dissentient voice, that of General Vincent Krasinski.* On the 24th of May, 1829, Nicholas was crowned at Warsaw.† The sceptre, however, was soon to be wrested from his hand. The character of guardians of liberal institutions was one which was incompatible with Russian feelings, education, and prejudices, and time soon removed the flimsy veil of pretence and appearances. Russia had before been the guardian of Poland and her government; and other Repnins and Salderns were still her ministers. Nicholas had told the Poles that they must make "sacrifices;"‡ but the sacrifices which were exacted were beyond endurance. "The improvement of the people," wrote an author§ in 1827, "is going on under a most extensive system of education; and while the history of Poland is present to the minds of Poles, it is impossible that a patriotic feeling should not grow up spontaneously." The patriotic feeling has sprung up, and it would be cruel indeed, if hopes so long deferred, but now raised so high, were to be again trodden down.

* The clemency of the Polish patriots saved the life of this man, one of the palatines, on his returning to Warsaw with his regiment on the 3d of December, 1830, one of the glorious days of the revolution. He was preserved by Szembeck from paying the penalty of his lukewarmness, and fell on his knees protesting his future devotion to the public cause.—*La Grande Semaine des Polonais*.

† In *Le Constitutionnel* of the 18th of May, 1829, will be found a curious article concerning this coronation.

‡ Proclamation of the 25th of December, 1825. "*Aidez nous par des sacrifices.*"

§ Bowring, *Specimens of Polish Poets*.

But we expect better things; it is to be trusted, for the credit of humanity in the 19th century, that the crime of a Catharine, the treachery of a Frederic William, and the hypocrisy of a Maria Theresa shall no longer succeed; but that, on the contrary, the "proud Poles" will go forth to victory with, at least, the prayers and good wishes of all but their despots; and that true liberty, so long a stranger to this brave nation, may forget her predilections as a "mountain nymph," and take up her abode once more in the plains of Poland.

POLAND.

A NARRATIVE OF RECENT EVENTS, ETC.

[Extracted from the Metropolitan Magazine, No. I., May, 1831.]

Preliminary Views—The Grand-duke Constantine's Barbarities—Political Persecutions—Case of Major Lukasinski—Revolution of 1830—Attack on Constantine's Palace—Escape of Constantine—Rise of the Engineers and Students—Polish Troops join the Patriots—Chlopicki appointed Dictator; resigns the Command of the Army to Skrzynecki.

AMID the varied conflicts of opinions among mankind, there are fortunately a few points on which there appears to be no possibility of the slightest discrepancy. And in the foremost rank of these may be placed the gross violation of any natural right, either in the case of an individual or a nation, under the cloak of expediency. In such cases right feelings unconsciously give the first impulse, and this is eventually confirmed by the sober dictates of deliberate reason. It is in this way that, we apprehend, the wrongs of Poland have excited so general an interest among mankind; have called forth such unqualified indignation against the partitioning powers, and such sympathy for her sufferings. Yet it may seem strange, amid such general sympathy, that no effort should have been made to save the devoted land of heroes. The truth is, that, notwithstanding this universal influence, nothing could be done to remedy the evil. The partitions occurred when all Europe was engrossed with internal affairs; and, under these circumstances, to dictate to the

three most powerful nations in Europe was impracticable; and the chance of attaining the object by friendly negotiations, when the second case arose, was completely destroyed by the destructive torrent of the French revolution, which, in its ruthless progress, threatened the annihilation of society, and menaced with complete extinction every institution, however sacred and useful, if opposed to its wild career. By such means, those most deeply interested in resisting the very principles of the Polish spoliation were driven (in self-defence) to league with her spoliators; and thus their power of vindicating her rights was suspended by the paramount necessity of opposing similar principles, operating on a more extended sphere. It was in vain, it could be clearly demonstrated, that the partition of Poland afforded a precedent, no less than the fraudulent conquest of Silesia, for any act of political robbery; for at that very moment circumstances rendered it a superior consideration to check the spread of the example. Thus, unnoticed, Poland would have remained unconscious of the enthusiastic interest excited by her fate, had not the fervid eloquence of the poet and the orator occasionally betrayed feelings of indignant sympathy, and showed that, though the flame was smouldering the fire was unextinguished, and that it might afterward burst forth in one glorious blaze. At last a ray of hope gleamed on Polish patriotism. In 1806 Napoleon, then in the full splendour of his glory, proposed the restoration of the kingdom of Poland. With the political events and considerations that influenced this extraordinary man, we have at present nothing to do, further than to state the historical fact that the visions which had flitted before the eyes of the delighted Poles passed away, that there was no restoration of the kingdom of Poland, and that all their highly-wrought expectations terminated in the erection of the duchy of Warsaw in 1807. Political distractions crowded fast

upon each other, and at last the dutchy of Warsaw fell into the hands of the victorious Russians after that campaign which cast Napoleon from the odious and unenviable rank of dictator of the destinies of continental Europe.

The negotiations which commenced with the downfall of Napoleon, and were completed by the treaty of Paris in 1814, necessarily embraced the future condition of Poland, which, though then occupied by the Russian troops, had, from previous cession to France, become a fit subject of arrangement, not for the eventual benefit of Russia alone, but for that of the entire European commonwealth. At that period the Emperor Alexander displayed a spirit of liberality, which appeared to have owed its origin to various circumstances. Madame de Staël has well delineated his moral character, by saying that he was "an accident,"—the mere creature of circumstances. Thus, on his return from witnessing the prosperity of this country, he was so enamoured of free institutions, that he ordained the establishment of 'trial by jury' throughout Poland, within six months. In this he was carried away by mere impulse, without the slightest regard to the fitness or unfitness of the institution (however admirable in some situations) to the wants, habits, and even prejudices of the people among whom he proposed to naturalize it. There were, however, in addition, some important considerations which may not have been without weight in producing a concession in favour of Poland.

Throughout all the reverses of Napoleon, even when deserted by his dearest connexions, the Poles remained faithful, and never faltered from their allegiance. Such chivalrous devotion obtained for the gallant Dombrowski and his band of heroes a favourable capitulation. But it was incompatible with the policy of the restored French government to retain in the centre of France men so deeply

pledged to their unsuccessful rival. The Poles, however, refused to return to their native land without an assurance that their national independence should be recognised. Alexander also knew that the tenure by which a Russian throne is held is somewhat frail, and appreciating the fidelity of the Poles, sought to secure their devotion by conferring the boon most ardently desired; and, as the first mark of favour, he conferred his brother Constantine upon them as the commander-in-chief. It is probable that each of the enumerated circumstances had an influence on the emperor's mind, while the whole determined him to re-erect the kingdom of Poland, in opposition to his first intention of annexing his recent conquest to Russia as a dependent province.

Austria, at this time animated, in all human probability, by jealousy of her great rival, favoured the scheme, and even offered to sacrifice a part of her own dominions.

France was decidedly favourable; while the British government advocated the same cause, from considering the future kingdom a rampart against Russian aggression. This view was communicated to the congress of Vienna by Lord Castlereagh, in 1815, and he urged the restoration of the kingdom of Poland so energetically, that his view was adopted, and the hope was reanimated that the days of Sobieski might again be revived.

The rapidity with which this decision was made probably owed much to the return of Napoleon from Elba, which rendered it imperative that Polish partisanship should not swell the ranks of the invader. It was accordingly decided, that the grand-dutchy of Warsaw should be attached to the empire of Russia under the name of the kingdom of Poland, and that it should be governed by separate institutions. The treaty of Vienna contains on this point the following article:—

“The dutchy of Warsaw, with the exception of

those provinces and districts which are otherwise disposed of by the following articles, is united to Russia. *It shall be irrevocably bound to the Russian empire by its constitution*, to be enjoyed by his majesty the emperor of all the Russias, his heirs, and successors for ever."

Thus it was established, that by the constitution alone the two sovereignties were united under one head. It is curious to remark the opinions of the Emperor Alexander himself on this point, as displayed in a letter from him, dated Vienna, 30th of April, 1815, to Count Ostrowski, the president of the Polish senate:—

"President of the senate, Count Ostrowski,

"It is with peculiar satisfaction that I announce to you, that the destiny of your country is about to be fixed by the concurrence of all the powers assembled at the congress of Vienna.

"The kingdom of Poland shall be united to the empire of Russia by the title of its own constitution, on which I am desirous of founding the happiness of the country. If the great interests involved in general tranquillity have not permitted all the Poles to be united under one sceptre, I have at least endeavoured to the uttermost of my power to soften the hardships of their separation, and every where to obtain for them, as far as practicable, the enjoyments of their nationality." This was published according to an authority given by the emperor to the court.

Thus a part of Poland was re-established as a separate state, by the act of all the powers of Europe; and although the Emperor of Russia was to be king of Poland, still the independence and separate existence of the kingdom were perfect. We shall hereafter see how consistently these principles have been maintained.

From the time of the first re-establishment of the kingdom until 1820, the affairs of Poland went on apparently in conformity with the constitution; but

there were perpetual breaches of that formal grant, until the Spanish revolution burst forth: then the intrigues of Austria, and the apprehension entertained by Alexander himself of military revolution, led to the establishment of the sadly-misnamed Holy Alliance, and an attempt was made to suppress entirely in Poland the spirit of national independence, which at one time, if not actually fostered, had been cheered by the smiles of the autocrat.

The Count Zaionczek, a Pole, was nominally the king's lieutenant, but the real power was invested in the grand-duke Constantine, who held the appointment of commander-in-chief of the army. This personage, who has played so conspicuous a part in the affairs of Poland, is worthy of something more than a mere passing notice. Though possessed of very considerable talents, he is, in fact, an untamed tiger, giving way on all occasions to the most violent paroxysms of temper. He has a deep sense of the rights of his order, and holds the feelings of every other class of human beings as absolutely naught. So soon, therefore, as he found that his imperial brother was no longer the liberal patron of constitutional rights, he gave the most unrestrained license to his capricious and violent injustice. A few instances are better than general assertion:—A most opulent and respectable man named Woloski, the principal brewer of Warsaw, had, through some of his people, without his own knowledge, hired as a servant in his establishment a Russian deserter. The offender was detected, and proof of innocence on the part of his employer being disallowed, the grand-duke, by his individual decree, ordered this respectable individual to be fettered, and in that condition he was compelled to work with a wheelbarrow in the public streets! His daughter, an amiable young lady, ventured to appeal to the mercy of the grand-duke in behalf of her parent; and the unmanly monster kicked her down stairs, using at the same time the

most abusive language. In the same way, he caused two Polish officers to be seized in the dead of night, and without trial, or even accusation, sent them to Russia. Some of the publishers of Warsaw having incurred his displeasure, he sent soldiers in the middle of the night to break up the presses and to destroy the types. Taxes were levied without consulting the diet; and when a distinguished member, Niemoyewski, protested against such proceedings, he was arrested and sent to his country-house under the charge of Cossacks, who kept him there for ten years, notwithstanding the most urgent affairs that required his attention elsewhere. The students, too, especially at Wilna, were persecuted and harassed by a most notorious person, named Nowozilzoff, who succeeded Prince Adam Czartoryski as curator of the universities. This fit tool in Constantine's hands displayed on every occasion the most atrocious rapacity and an entire absence of common humanity. One of the richest inhabitants of Lithuania had been arrested at the instance of this modern Sejanus; but 15,000 ducats, or 7000*l.* sterling, effected his liberation. His most infamous act, if it be possible to give any pre-eminence in acts all most pre-eminently wicked, was performed on the following occasion:—A boy of nine years of age, a son of Count Plater, had in the playfulness of childhood written in chalk on one of the forms, "The 3d of May for ever!" that being the anniversary of Kosciusko's constitution. The fact was discovered by some of the innumerable spies, employed even among these infants, to Nowozilzoff, who instituted an inquiry among the boys—not one would betray poor Plater: they were all ordered to be flogged with the utmost severity! The unhappy offender declared that he had written the offensive words. The grand-duke condemned him to be a soldier for life, incapable of advancement in the army; and when his mother threw herself before his carriage to implore forgive-

ness for her wretched child, he spurned her like a dog with his foot!

Every one possessed of the means naturally fled from such unheard-of tyranny, and, among others, a highly accomplished gentleman, who sought refuge in London. Constantine sent an emissary after him, in the foolish belief that he could carry him off. The emissary soon discovered the folly of his errand, and returned, to the great chagrin of his master.

Shaving the heads of females who displeased him was a common occurrence; and, on one occasion, four soldiers were severely punished because they abstained from carrying such an order into effect, as they found it impossible to do so without using personal violence. Tarring and feathering the shaved heads of the offenders was also a favourite recreation of the commander-in-chief, whose delight it was to witness these barbarities.

This career of cruelty and oppression on one occasion met with a reproof, and the manner in which it was received is too illustrative of the grand-duke's character not to be recorded: Among other subjects of his oppression was a Polish officer of rank, who was confined in a foul dungeon placed under a common sewer. There the unhappy man was wasting away in a noisome and pestilential atmosphere. This happened to reach the ears of one of those men who do honour to their high calling,—a bold, intrepid priest, who considered himself bound, as the minister of a benevolent Deity, to interpose, and if possible to soften the obdurate heart of the tyrant. By the mere accident of receiving permission from the grand-duke Michael, he was admitted to Constantine's presence. He stated the object of his visit firmly but respectfully. The grand-duke stormed—the priest declared, that undeterred by menaces he would fulfil what he deemed a paramount duty. Astonished at this, the grand-duke sprang out of the window, declaring that there was

a madman within. The priest was conveyed to a convent, where he was confined; but his interference effected no relief to the individual he sought to serve, nor did he obtain any general relaxation.

While acts of private oppression were calling forth all the hatred to Russia which is the birthright of every Pole, political tyranny was superadded, as if it were desirable to concentrate upon one point the entire indignation of a brave and devoted people. We have already adverted to the patriotic association, modelled almost after the recommendation of the Emperor Alexander. This association, formed by the celebrated General Dombrowski, had at first a masonic and military character; having, as its object, mutual good offices among the army. Its existence was perfectly known to Alexander; who alleged in his discourses to the diet, and indeed on all occasions, that he could not reunite, as he earnestly desired, the Polish provinces in actual union with Russia, with the revived kingdom, because he could not discover among them either a Polish spirit or a desire to become Poles. He therefore recommended that the association formed should extend its objects and become the means of promoting a national spirit. Of his intervention abundant proof was furnished, in prosecutions on which we shall hereafter touch. For a time this recommendation was not acted upon; but in 1820 it was adopted; when unhappily the causes, as we have already seen, which effected an entire revolution in the emperor's political views, induced him to denounce the association as treasonable. And for its suppression, in direct violation of the constitution, he appointed a military commission, which tried and condemned civilians without any of the prescribed formalities; and, as if he were desirous of rendering its proceedings still more odious, he composed it of men of infamous character,—Hauke, Blömer, Kornatowski, Chankiewicz, and others, mere tools of the grand-

duke; who, in point of fact, issued the proclamations, dictated the sentences, and provided for their due execution. One of the most atrocious acts of this most atrocious period is the treatment of Major Lukasinski, a Polish officer of high character and blameless life. He was distinguished by the grand-duke, indeed was especially favoured on all occasions; but, being a member of the association at the time that it became particularly obnoxious, he was arrested, and after some time brought into the presence of his imperious chief; who, addressing him in terms of kindness and friendship, invited him to repose confidence in the known attachment he felt for him: thus thrown off his guard, the unhappy man spoke with frankness and candour. He was removed to his dungeon, tried on his confession to the grand-duke, was convicted, and condemned to be deprived of all his honours, to chains, and to perpetual imprisonment. In compliance with this sentence, he was conveyed to the fortress of Zamosc, where upwards of a thousand persons similarly circumstanced were confined. One of the grand-duke's emissaries was introduced into the prison; he got up a conspiracy for effecting the escape of the prisoners, and, without the privity of the wretched Lukasinski, contrived to procure his nomination as the leader of the conspirators. Then further persecutions were instituted, and for this imputed crime, which, even if real, could not be blamed by any man, he was condemned to death. This was, however, too humane; death would have afforded relief to the wearied sufferer, which was not the object of Constantine. It was therefore commuted to perpetual imprisonment and a **WEEKLY FLOGGING!** And it was directed that a record should be kept for Constantine's especial information of the effect of each blow on the wretched victim! Humanity recoils at recording such atrocity, such cold-blooded ferocity; and we should not have ventured on making the statement, had not the facts been

attested by documents found among the papers of the grand-duke after his precipitate retreat from Warsaw last November. To guard against the possibility of relief or escape, Lukasinski was alternately confined in a prison in the heart of Warsaw, or in the fortress of Goura; and he was instantly removed, if the scene of his actual sufferings were even suspected. Unfortunately for him, at the moment of the insurrection of Warsaw he was at Goura; and although jewels, papers, and other valuables were left behind, Lukasinski was too precious not to be carried off with scrupulous care. The actual history of his sufferings would have contributed to animate even the most torpid patriotism, when even the imperfect statements that are now communicated to the English public cannot fail to excite a disgust and detestation for the tyrant, only equalled by the sympathy for the victim of his persecution. But notwithstanding these increasing grounds of dissatisfaction,—nay, of deep and unqualified abhorrence,—the good sense of the associated regenerators of their country's freedom prevailed over their excited feelings. The ferocity of the unprincipled savage but confirmed them in the path of duty, and in the necessity of the utmost caution. Yet thus rendered circumspect, they never forgot that these practical illustrations of tyranny imposed upon them additional and more urgent duties to their country. Under these convictions they restricted their operations to the most narrow limit, and nothing beyond Poland and Poles was ever regarded in even a speculative view. Yet, in spite of all this caution, on the breaking out of the Russian conspiracy, after the death of Alexander, in favour of Constantine, in opposition to his younger brother the present emperor, attempts were made to connect the Polish association with the Russian revolt.

Under this pretext an immense number of the association, already in bad odour from having been

denounced by Alexander, were arrested. The most chosen victims were persons eminent for their rank, attainments, virtues, and patriotism; not that noisy and presumptuous quality miscalled patriotism, which displays itself in idle declamation and useless turbulence, but in that silent devotion to the best interests of their country, illustrated by improving its condition and by promoting every measure calculated to benefit the people. The individuals so arrested were declared by an imperial ordinance to be guilty, in defiance of an acquittal by the senate, which alone could legally investigate the charges. The imperial decree then issued, condemning the accused to imprisonment, exile, and every penalty that unprincipled caprice could suggest. In this career of criminal folly a singular step was taken, without the chief movers conceiving it possible to produce some most important effects in the sequel. The whole of the alleged offences were published, the defence suppressed; but, as these offences involved only what every Pole felt to be a sacred duty, the disclosure produced fresh ardour in the cause, and led to the establishment of innumerable other associations, all of which conduced mainly to the recent explosion.

Among the illustrious men there is a gentleman, now in London, whose personal suffering may be considered a fair example of the system pursued. His career may be described as one of pain and misery. His father—a distinguished champion of the liberties of his country at the period of the last partition—was expatriated; being accompanied with his wife, the subject of the present detail was born during their flight, and was seized with his father's property by the government! He was placed with a man who appears to have possessed some of the feelings of humanity, for on the death of his own child, he reported the stranger to be dead, at the same time restoring him to his parents. Subsequently to the establishment of the duchy of Warsaw, he entered

the service of Napoleon, and served with distinction; but was taken prisoner in 1812, and was three years in prison. After the cession to Russia, and the establishment of the kingdom, he wished to retire from military life; and, after fourteen refusals to accept his resignation, the permission to retire was most ungraciously granted. His pertinacity had offended, and his integrity made him a marked man. Accordingly, on the occasion of which we speak, he was arrested (having at that time previously spent about seven years in Russian prisons), and without condemnation placed in a dark dungeon, where for eleven months he neither saw the face of man nor the light of day. At the expiration of that time he, with others, was suddenly taken from their cells, thrown into common carts, and conveyed under a burning sun to St. Petersburg, where he was kept in rigorous custody, until he had completed his fourth year of additional captivity. Almost at the moment of his arrest he had been married to a lovely and amiable female: he had no intercourse with his family during his wearisome confinement; and when he returned to be cheered by domestic affection, he found that he had become a father, but that his wife, worn out by her feelings, was no longer the beautiful partner of his hopes and fears, but an exhausted being, dropping fast into her grave.—She died in two months! Acts like these necessarily roused that spirit which has since spoken in the voice of thunder to the oppressor. The suppressed indignation burst forth on the 30th of November, 1830, in the following manner:—The police of the grand-duke, ever on the alert to render themselves acceptable to their master, by affording him objects on which he might wreak his ruthless passions, planned an association for the purpose of involving the most respectable and distinguished persons in Poland; and for that purpose inveigled a number of ardent youths, just after the revolution in Paris, to attend meetings, and to avow patriotic

opinions. The prime conspirator, either from indolence, or a belief that there might be danger in devising a new organization for the association, used that which had been discovered during the early proceedings against the patriots. A copy of this scheme falling into the hands of some of the members of the actual associations, excited a suspicion that they had been betrayed; and the recollection of former horrors decided them to take instant measures for liberating themselves from their detestable thralldom.

Constantine had established a school for the education of inferior officers, with a view to destroying the national character in the army. The numbers at this establishment were at this time 180, of whom not more than six or eight were parties to the association. These, however, early in the evening of the day already mentioned, went into their barrack, addressed their comrades, explained their views, and without a single dissentient, not even excepting one individual who was sick in bed, they armed themselves, and commenced their operations.

In order to understand their proceedings it is necessary to give a short account of local circumstances. The grand-duke, though affecting a reckless courage on all occasions, did not choose to incur the risk of living in the centre of Warsaw, but established himself at the palace of Belveder in the outskirts of the city, having at a short distance the barracks of three regiments of Russian guards. From some whimsical motive he surrounded the barrack with a wide and deep ditch, over which some very narrow bridges were thrown, so that by boats it was most conveniently crossed. Constantine had no guards about his residence, but the disguised spies were so numerous, that no stranger could approach beyond the outer gate without interruption. The habits of the grand-duke, too, favoured the plan of the conspirators. His usual practice was to rise at four, to appear

among the troops and in public until his hour of dinner, which is two in the afternoon; then to retire to bed, sleep until seven or eight o'clock, then rise again and devote himself to amusement for the evening. The hour chosen for proceeding to his palace, for the purpose of making him a prisoner to be detained as a hostage, was seven. At that time the young soldiers proceeded to the bridge of Sobieski, where the main body posted themselves, while a dozen of the most determined pressed forward to complete their object. They forced their way into the palace, where they were first opposed by the director of the police, one Lubowidizki, who fled on being wounded: next they encountered the Russian General Gendre, a man infamous for his crimes; he was killed in the act of resisting. Lastly, when on the point of reaching the bedchamber of the grand-duke, who, alarmed, had just risen, they were stopped by the valet-de-chambre Kochanowski, who by closing a secret door enabled his master to escape undressed through the window. He fled to his guards, who instantly turned out. Disappointed in their prey, the devoted band rejoined their companions at the bridge of Sobieski, where they had been awaiting the result of the plan. On finding that the first object had failed, they resolved on returning into the city. In doing this it was necessary to pass close to the barracks, where the soldiers were already mounted, but unable to cross the ditch from the precautionary arrangements of the small bridges. They could therefore only fire on the hostile party, who, from being thus peculiarly situated, returned the fire so briskly that they killed 300 before they retreated, carrying off only one of their party wounded. On reaching the city, they instantly liberated every state prisoner, were joined by the school of the engineers and the students of the university. A party entered the only two theatres open, calling out "Women, home—men, to arms!"

Both requisitions were instantaneously complied with. The arsenal was next forced ; and, in one hour and a half from the first movement, so electrical was the cry of liberty, that 40,000 men were in arms. The sappers and the fourth Polish regiment declared in favour of the insurrection very soon : and by eleven o'clock the remainder of the Polish troops in Warsaw, declaring that their children were too deeply compromised to be abandoned, espoused the popular cause. On learning this the grand-duke fell back, forcing two regiments of Polish guards along with him.

Nowozilzoff, the criminal coadjutor of the grand-duke, from some presentiment of danger, had gone to St. Petersburg a day before the revolution broke out. The functionaries, thus abandoned, to check the spread of principles opposed to those of Russian policy, invited the most distinguished patriots to join them. These were Czartoryski,* Radziwill, Niemcewicz, Chlopicki, Paç, Kochnowski, and Lelewel. No good, however, resulted from this heterogeneous assemblage ; for, in the hope of accommodation, the patriots were induced to allow the grand-duke to retire under a convention, when they might have captured his entire army. The escape of so detested a person and his myrmidons excited great dissatisfaction ; but no excess was committed, although the exuberance of joy among the patriot bands produced a thousand extravagant demonstrations of their feelings. Disorder might, however, have followed ; and Chlopicki, a man of stern character and known devotion to the cause, declared himself dictator ; a declaration that was universally satisfactory, from the acknowledged qualities of the man. The attempt to blend his military duties with political details, in the end, proved more than he was equal to. He summoned the diet, and sent negotiators (Prince

* See note, p. 329.

Lubecki and Mr. Iezierski) to St. Petersburg, he demanded uncontrolled authority, which was granted with one dissentient voice. Iezierski returned from Petersburg unsuccessful; as the basis of negotiation insisted upon by the emperor was unconditional submission. Chlopicki, dissatisfied with his own failure, retired, and for two days there was no executive power; yet no one breathed a thought of abandoning the cause. The diet then chose Radziwill as commander-in-chief: though brave, honourable, and intelligent, he wanted military experience; and assumed the authority merely to prevent anarchy. Chlopicki discharged the functions of the major-general of the army; and the prince, with the approval of all classes, soon resigned the supreme command to the present generalissimo, Skrzynecki, who has so nobly vindicated his claim to the arduous task imposed upon him.

PRINCE CZARTORYSKI.

NOTE TO PAGE 327.

THIS illustrious personage, Prince Adam Czartoryski, is the eldest son of the late prince of the same house, and is descended from the family of Jagellon, the ancient sovereigns of Lithuania. His father was long known, not only as a nobleman of the first rank in Poland, but as one of the most accomplished scholars in Europe. Such was his reputation, that at the period of the last vacancy in the throne of Poland, Poniatowski (afterward king) was deputed by the diet to propitiate the Empress Catharine, to second the election of Czartoryski; but the deputy's handsome form found such favour in the licentious eyes of the modern Messalina, that he ceased to urge the suit of the diet, and returned the avowed nominee of his imperial mistress. Prince Czartoryski's claims on the throne, popularity, and consequent influence, rendered him odious to the court of St. Petersburg; and when the last act of spoliation was perpetrated, his lands were ravaged, his beautiful castle of Pulawy destroyed, and a sentence of extermination pronounced against him, unless he would consent to send his two sons, one the subject of this notice, and the other, Prince Constantine Czartoryski, as hostages to St. Petersburg. To avoid this wretched alternative, the prince and his princess, who still survives, consented to the separation, and the two young noblemen were placed under the eye of those who were deemed worthy, by the autocrat, of reforming their principles. The talents displayed by both brothers soon obtained for them the admiration of the court; and as it was of great importance to gain them over, every mark of imperial favour was heaped upon them by the Emperor Alexander, with whom, from infancy, they had established terms of the utmost familiarity. The elder brother held for

a long time the portfolio of the foreign office, and, in his official capacity, accompanied his imperial master to the scenes of some of his most serious disasters. During Napoleon's invasion, Prince Constantine was in Poland, and confiding in the integrity of the then master of the destinies of Europe, and breathing naught but freedom for his country, he joined the banners of the invader, and raised a regiment at his own expense to aid in the cause of liberation. At Smolensk he received a severe wound, from the effects of which he has never yet recovered. He resides at Vienna.

The influence of Prince Adam Czartoryski proved to be singularly useful to Poland after the downfall of Napoleon. He interposed, and interposed successfully, between the anger of Alexander and his suffering country; and, on the establishment of the kingdom of Poland, was appointed the curator of all the universities, both there and in the incorporated provinces. These duties he sedulously discharged, until he was superseded by the notorious Count Novozilzoff. From this period he has lived in retirement, faithfully performing all the duties of private life. The promotion of agriculture, science in all its branches, and kindly offices among mankind constituted his occupations until recent events drew him from his privacy. The first call was made by the Russian functionaries, as stated in the text, for the purpose of self-protection; the second was that of his devoted country, when a government was essential to success. He was chosen not only one of the five members of the executive body, but its president, a station which he still honourably fills. Into his new office he has carried all the unostentatious and disinterested virtues that adorned Pulawy, and there is little doubt that if (and no one suspects that such will not be the case) the independence of Poland be fairly won, the choice of his country will point to him as its sovereign. Having finished his academical career at the university of Edinburgh, he early acquired a strong taste for English institutions and for Englishmen, and of this he gave substantial proof by devoting 250*l.* a-year to the exclusive purchase of English books. His revenues are enormous, but his liberality is unbounded; and as it is a rule in his munificent establishment to provide liberally for the families of all his dependants, his means are compara-

tively restricted, but his personal wants are few ; and that he is ready to accommodate himself to circumstances was well shown by his only observation on hearing of the confiscation of his large property in Podolia by Nicholas. "Instead of riding, I must walk ; and instead of sumptuous fare, I must dine on buckwheat."* Such is a faint outline of this illustrious man's character. Were it only for the admirable example of such an individual guiding the reins of the government of a devoted people, it is most ardently to be hoped that Poland may triumph over her enemies, and be raised to that rank from which she was degraded only by the basest of treasons.

* The common food of the poor.

APPENDIX.

THE following extracts from the Constitution given by Alexander to the kingdom of Poland are annexed, to show how far the Russians violated the laws made by themselves. Both in letter and in spirit, the whole were arbitrarily abrogated.

PRINCIPAL ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER OF POLAND.

SECTION I.

Political Relations of the Kingdom.

ARTICLE 3.

The crown of the kingdom of Poland is hereditary in our person, and that of our descendants, heirs, and successors, according to the order of succession established for the imperial throne of Russia.

ARTICLE 8.

The external political relations of our empire shall be common to the kingdom of Poland.

SECTION II.

General Guarantees.

ARTICLE 11.

The Roman Catholic religion, professed by the greatest part of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Poland, shall be the object of the peculiar care of the government, but with-

out derogating at all from the liberty of other forms of worship, which, without exception, may be followed, and enjoy the protection of government. The difference in Christian sects makes none in the enjoyment of civil and political rights.

ARTICLE 16.

The liberty of the press is guaranteed. The law will regulate the means of repressing its abuses.

ARTICLE 17.

The law equally protects all citizens, without distinction as to class or condition.

ARTICLE 19.

No person shall be arrested, but according to the forms and in cases determined by law.

ARTICLE 21.

Every individual arrested shall be brought, within three days at furthest, before a competent tribunal, to be examined or judged according to the prescribed forms. If he is acquitted at the first investigation, he shall be set at liberty.

ARTICLE 22.

In cases determined by law, bail shall be granted.

ARTICLE 29.

Public employments, civil and military, can only be exercised by Poles.

ARTICLE 31.

The Polish nation shall have, for ever, a national representation; it shall consist of the king and two chambers. The first shall be formed of the senate, the second of deputies and delegates of the commons.

SECTION III.

ARTICLE 35.

The government rests in the person of the king. He exercises the functions of executive power in all their

plenitude. All executive or administrative authority can only emanate from him.

ARTICLE 45.

All our successors to the kingdom of Poland are bound to be crowned kings of Poland in the capital, according to the form which we will establish, and they shall take the oath below :

"I swear and promise, before God and on His gospel, to maintain and support the constitutional charter with all my power."

ARTICLE 47.

All the king's orders and decrees shall be countersigned by a minister at the head of the department ; and who shall be responsible for every thing that these orders and decrees may contain contrary to the constitution and laws.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Regency.

ARTICLE 58.

The regent of Russia shall take the same oath in the presence of the members of the regency of the kingdom.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Lieutenant and Council of State.

ARTICLE 63.

The council of state, presided over by the king or his lieutenants, is composed of ministers, state counsellors, master of requests, as well as persons whom it may please the king to appoint specially.

ARTICLE 65.

The state council is divided into the council of administration and the general assembly.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Branches of the Administration.

ARTICLE 76.

The execution of the laws shall be intrusted to the different branches of public administration mentioned below ; namely :—

1. The commission of worship and public education.
2. The commission of justice, chosen from the members of the supreme tribunal.
3. The commission for the interior and the police.
4. Commission for war.
5. Commission for finance and the treasury.

These different commissions shall be each presided and directed by a minister named for that purpose.

ARTICLE 82.

The chief minister of the departments and the members of the commissions of government shall answer and are responsible to the high national court for every breach of the constitutional charter, laws, or decrees of the king of which they shall be guilty.

SECTION IV.

National Representation.

CHAPTER I.

ARTICLE 86.

The legislative power rests in the person of the king and in the two chambers of the diet, conformably to the arrangements of the article 31.

ARTICLE 87.

The ordinary diet assembles every two years at Warsaw, at the time determined by the king's summons. The session lasts thirty days. The king can prorogue, adjourn, and dissolve it.

ARTICLE 93.

When the diet do not vote a new budget, the old one is to be in force till next session. Nevertheless, the budget ceases at the end of four years, if the diet is not convoked during that period.

ARTICLE 97.

It rests with the king to lay the motions of the council of state before the chamber of the senate, or that of the deputies : excepting the motions about finance laws, which must first be carried in the chamber of deputies.

ARTICLE 102.

Motions are carried by a majority of votes.

ARTICLE 103

A bill thrown out in one chamber cannot be modified by another.

ARTICLE 105.

If the king gives his sanction, the bill passes into a law. The king orders the publication in the prescribed forms.— If the king refuses his sanction, the bill is void.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Senate.

ARTICLE 108.

The senate is composed,
Of princes of the blood, imperial and royal ;
Of bishops ;
Of palatines ;
Of castellans.

ARTICLE 109.

The number of senators cannot exceed half the number of members and deputies.

ARTICLE 111.

To be eligible for a candidate to the office of senator, palatine, or castellan, one must be thirty-five years old, and

pay taxes yearly to the amount of 2000 Polish florins, and unite the conditions required by the fixed laws.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Chamber of Deputies.

ARTICLE 118.

The chamber of deputies is composed,

1. Of seventy-seven members elected by the dietines or assemblies of nobles, at the rate of a member for every district ;

2. Of fifty-one representatives of the commons.

The chamber is presided by a marshal chosen from the members and named by the king.

ARTICLE 120.

The members of the chamber of deputies remain in office during six years ; they are renewed in thirds every second year. Consequently, and for the first time, only one-third of the member of the chambers of deputies will remain in office, during two years, and another third four years. The list of members going out at these periods shall be formed by lot.

ARTICLE 121.

To be eligible to the chamber of deputies, the age of thirty years is requisite, the enjoyment of civil rights, and to pay taxes of 100 Polish florins a year.

ARTICLE 124.

The king has the right to dissolve the chamber of deputies. If he makes use of this right, the chamber separates, and the king orders in the course of two months new elections of members and deputies.

SECTION V.

Of the Judicial Order.

ARTICLE 138.

The judicial order is constitutionally independent.

ARTICLE 144.

Justices of the Peace.

There shall be justices of peace for all classes of the inhabitants.

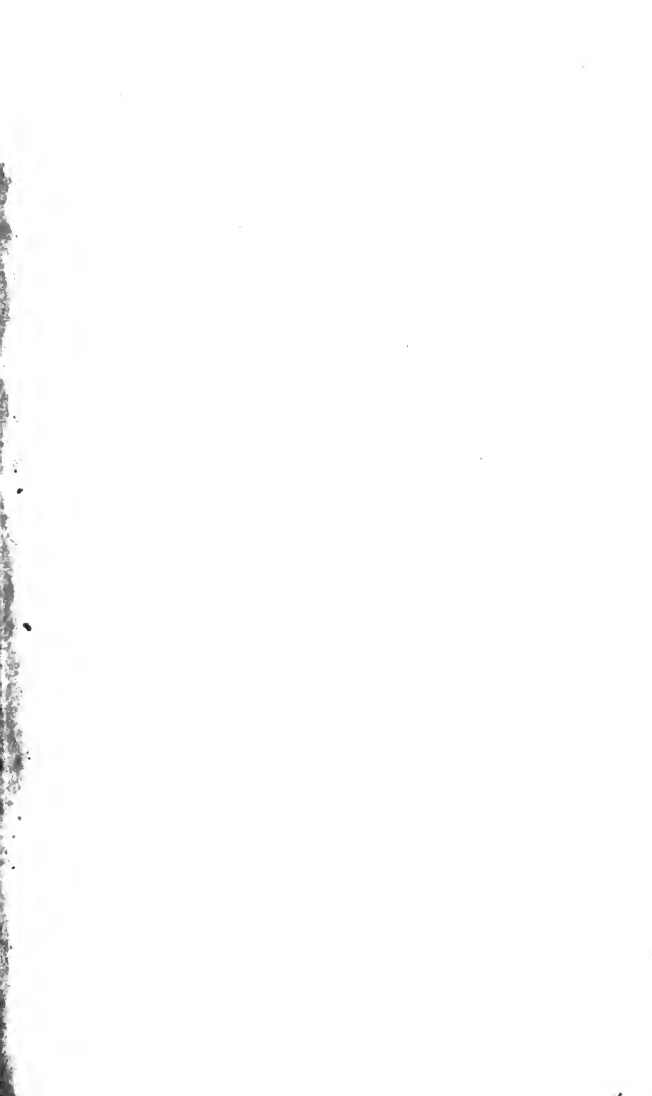
ARTICLE 155.

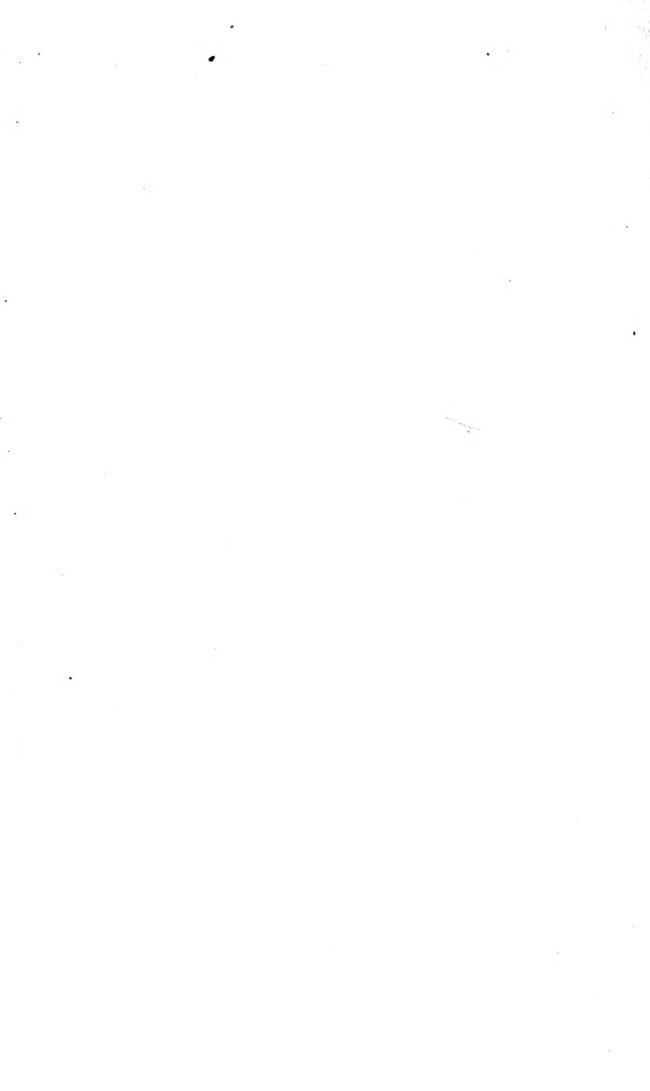
All former laws and institutions contrary to the present are abrogated.

Given in our royal castle at Warsaw on the 15-27 Nov.
1815.

(Signed) ALEXANDER.

THE END.





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